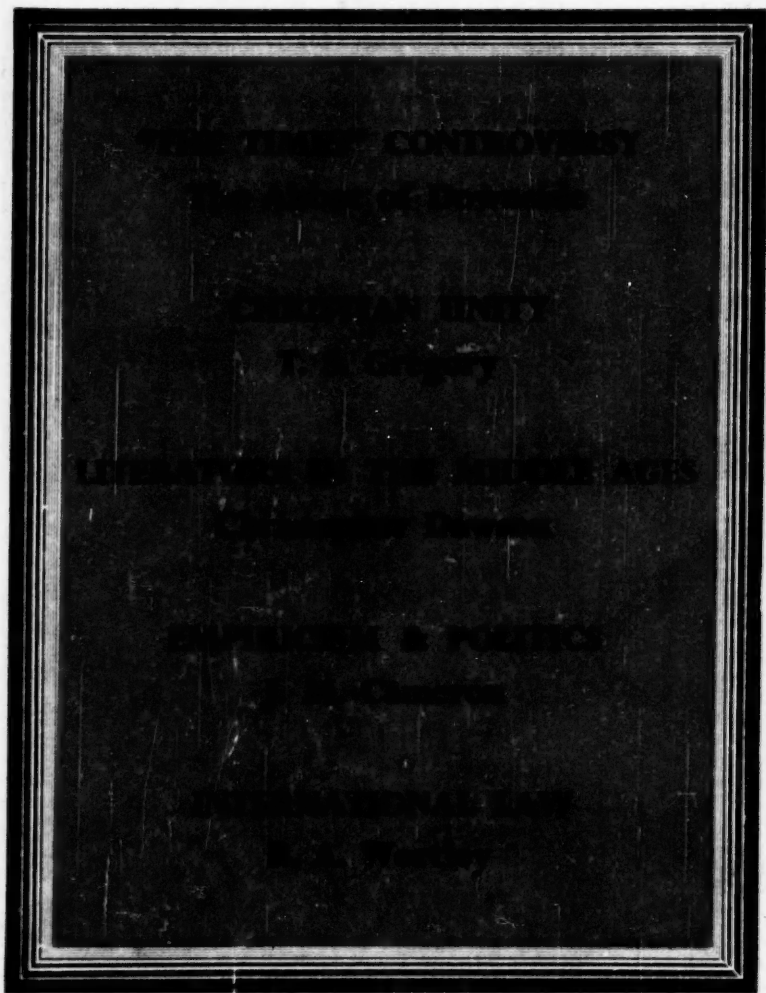


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# CAELO TONANTEM . . .

## Reflections on a Recent Controversy<sup>1</sup>

By THE ABBOT OF DOWNSIDE

SOME years ago the lamented humorous artist Pont contributed to *Punch* a series of illustrations of the characteristics of the English people. I do not remember whether 'A Weakness for Reading *The Times*' was included in the series, but there can be no doubt that it deserved a place. It might sound discourteous to describe *The Times* as a habit-producing drug, but there must be very many of its readers who would confess to a general feeling of malaise when some chance of travel or illness separates them from their daily indulgence in the Thunderer.

The recent correspondence in that journal's columns on Catholicism *vis-à-vis* the other Christian communions was one of those things that produce this sense of dependence; and the subsequent publication in pamphlet form of almost all the published letters, together with the article by a Special Correspondent which lighted the fuse on 31 October, and the leading article of 29 November in which the resultant explosion was assessed, is a welcome event both for those who followed the correspondence from day to day and for the less fortunate people who missed all or some of it. My purpose in the following pages is to offer some reflections on this pamphlet, such as occur to a Catholic who has no responsibility for formulating an 'official' attitude.

The original article is something of an enigma. It purported to be a 'tentative review of the present position and immediate prospects of the largest and most influential of the Christian communions'—a fascinating project, but one not very adequately carried out in the sequel. Some statistics of Church membership and of the episcopate were copied from *The Catholic Directory*. It was suggested that while doctrinal and administrative authority had been centralized in modern times 'to an unprecedented degree', the government of the Church is too much in the hands of canonists and casuists, and that the local hierarchies do not suffi-

<sup>1</sup> *Catholicism Today*. (The Times Publishing Company Limited, 1949. Price 6d.)

ciently share the concern of the Holy See (since re-emphasized in the Holy Father's Christmas message) for the 'reintegration of Christendom'. As regards England and America, the alleged fact that Catholic intellectual life lacks vigour and is defective in influence upon the non-Catholic public is—it would seem—put down to official patronage of exotic devotions and the cramping effect of strict censorship.

A Catholic must feel that there is a good deal more than that to be said, and that the author perhaps focuses his vision too narrowly on conditions in this country. We should have hoped for some reference to the tremendous revival in the spiritual and intellectual life of Catholicism since 1845 (to choose a date which may remind us that Newman was far and away the greatest intellectual leader of religion in the Anglo-Saxon world of the nineteenth century); to the developments in the mission field, both in the extent and fruitfulness of missionary effort and in the policy, steadily pursued, of creating indigenous hierarchies; and to the very modern and significant developments in the sphere of lay Catholic Action. As illustrations of the Church's influence, the post-war Continental Christian political parties also deserve a mention.

But the real purpose of the article may have been different from its stated programme. It went on to suggest that the time has come for 'Rome'—does this mean the Holy See?—to 'make a gesture to the Christian world in keeping with the realities of the hour'. The suggested gesture was to be 'the initiation of a programme of free and open discussion with qualified'—does this mean authorized?—'representatives of the various Christian bodies'.

The subject of discussion first suggested was 'the relations between Rome and the other Christian bodies'. And as the multiplicity of Christian sects was described as a scandal both in the mission field and at home, we should infer that the aim of the proposed discussion was to see whether reunion is not a practical possibility. But—presumably if reunion should prove to be outside the range of any short-dated hope—it was also suggested that the Christian bodies might consider 'how best they can give effect to such principles as are held in common'. These, it will be noted, are two very different subjects of discussion, and it might be doubted whether a conference that had tried and failed to pave the way for reunion would be the ideal body to discuss methods of inter-denominational co-operation in the only fields in which this is possible, the fields for instance of politics, moral witness and

social reconstruction. But perhaps the writer of the article was envisaging not one but two conferences.

Whatever may be thought of the lucidity with which the purposes of the article were disclosed, there can be no doubt that it was a brilliant piece of journalism, using that word in no derogatory sense. It raised not one but a number of hares, and the pack was soon in full cry. 'An uncommonly large number of letters to the Editor on the subject reached Printing House Square every day throughout November,' of which only a selection could be printed. Almost the whole of this published correspondence, with a few minor alterations to a letter here or there, is reproduced in the present pamphlet, and we must now address ourselves to its consideration.

It must be gratifying, not only to Catholics but to all who have the Christian cause at heart, that so great an interest was manifested. It would seem that questions of high religious policy are 'good copy', at least for journals that cater for the middle classes. Gratifying too, though not surprising to admirers of *The Times*, was the scope afforded by the editor to the expression of this interest. On the other hand, it must be remembered that the conditions of discussion in the columns of a daily paper encourage haste in composition and may give cause for regretful after-thoughts. It is all to the good that the pamphlet has found room for some of these reconsiderations. Thus to one letter from a Catholic contributor two significant phrases have now been added, which do not indeed alter the writer's original meaning, but certainly defend it against possible misinterpretations. Personally, however, I am sorry that a modification made in one of the non-Catholic letters has led to the omission of a retraction, now otiose, which was very greatly to the author's credit and was one of the more charming incidents of the discussion.

One writer laments 'the narrowness and the utter lack of charity and tolerance', mainly, I think he means, on the part of Catholics, 'revealed by this correspondence'. But he seems to have been very understandably upset by a phrase in which Mr. Arnold Lunn spoke about a tendency, discernible in the Church of England and elsewhere, to 'degenerate into camouflaged Unitarians'. I am sure Mr. Lunn would not have wished to speak uncharitably about Unitarians; he only meant that, for one who believes that our Lord is God, a weakening of that faith among those who once held it must seem like a regrettable decline from the norm. I should have thought that the correspondence on the whole main-

tained a remarkably high level of courtesy and charity—especially if we compare it with the controversy of other ages. Humour, perhaps, was not so much in evidence, though not quite absent. It was for instance, we may hope, intentionally and therefore quite delightfully amusing that the Bishop of Down and Dromore chose for his comment on Salmon's celebrated attack upon Infallibility the words *causa finita est*—this being the famous epigram in which St. Augustine proclaimed that Pelagianism had been put out of court by the Holy See's condemnation of it; the phrase as used by St. Augustine was thus a rather particularly striking implicit Patristic testimony to the Pope's infallibility. I liked, too, the Dean of Chichester's suggestion that in seeking for united action in a limited sphere we should not try to 'mobilize nervous hierarchs'—one wishes that the correspondence could have been accompanied by illustrations.<sup>1</sup>

Among the services rendered by these letters and the two articles is that they afford Catholics material for self-examination. They charge us, actually or equivalently, with the following (among other) defects and faults:

(1) The Catholic Church, 'having no twentieth-century Aquinas', sometimes appears 'intellectually ill at ease' in the modern world, and in particular English-speaking Catholics seem unable to impress non-Catholics intellectually;

(2) the government of the Church is too much in the hands of moralists and canonists, with a consequent tendency to 'quench the spirit';

(3) the Church has too little sense of the need of corporate reunion as opposed to individual conversions;

(4) there is a tendency to identify Catholicism with 'Mediterranean' devotions;

(5) censorship cramps intellectual life;

(6) the Church indulges in 'reproachful admonition' instead of showing an openhearted willingness to negotiate with non-Christian bodies;

(7) the Church is lacking in humility in her refusal to admit the Catholicity of the Anglican Greek and Russian Churches;

(8) 'Rome' seeks to dominate instead of offering free fellowship, whereas 'exclusiveness and ecclesiasticism are foreign to the life and teaching of Jesus';

<sup>1</sup> The printer has added to the gaiety of the pamphlet by substituting 'play' for 'pray' in a letter on p. 43.



(9) Roman Catholics in this country seem less willing than the other Christian bodies to co-operate even outside the dogmatic and theological field—they often seem to have scruples even about co-operation in (public) devotion, scruples which seem 'clean contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel';

(10) in particular, it is discourteous to object to an Anglican bishop giving a blessing at a joint public meeting;

(11) the Church is infected with the intransigent, ultra-montane, totalitarian spirit;

(12) she has crushed the power to criticize herself and 'silenced the voice of prophecy within her borders';

(13) she has too often sought 'increased worldly power for the ecclesiastical corporation' as though this was the same as promoting God's cause;

(14) she is reluctant to share the blame for the divisions of Christendom;

(15) we let our 'private interpretation' of the nature of God (*sic*) stand in the way of the unity of Christendom;

(16) we will not allow liberty of thought to non-Catholics;

(17) we have never defined what is meant by the infallibility of the Church;

(18) 'many Protestants believe that Rome has a unique opportunity, but that she is using it for sectarian ends'; she discourages even the most modest attempts at co-operation, and adopts an attitude of lofty disdain and fanatical exclusiveness.

Some of these charges we may well take to heart. Thus it may be true that in an age of great practical difficulty and complexity the Church's higher clergy tend to be recruited too preponderantly from the ranks of the administrators and the legally-minded—the same tendency is, I suspect, present in some other Christian bodies, though in the Church of England it may be counteracted to some extent by a Prime Minister's interest in some specially notable preacher or writer. It may well be that 'Mediterranean' devotions are sometimes imprudently imported and imposed in this country, though there is a strong undercurrent of resistance and the decision rests to a large extent with the individual parish priest or religious superior. As regards the quest of worldly power for the 'ecclesiastical corporation', I can hardly think that this is a marked vice of the contemporary clergy, who have usually to be content if they are allowed to creep about between the feet of the colossus of modern secularism; but the danger is always present,

and the Catholic clergy of all states and ranks might well meditate more often on St. Matthew xxiii.

Then it is said, as was remarked above, that Catholicism is maladjusted intellectually in the modern world, and that there is a shortage of great intellectual leaders of Catholicism such as might exert a considerable influence outside the borders of the Church. If this is so, it is not merely due to the rigidity of censorship and to the patronage of 'Mediterranean' devotions. Censorship is a necessity but, we may grant, a regrettable necessity; we all experienced a severe form of it during the recent war. And it can be abused; perhaps ecclesiastical censors should remember more steadily that their function is limited to the elimination of statements contrary to Catholic faith or morals. But the real cause of such maladjustment, so far as it exists (and it is no merely modern phenomenon), is the divorce between secular culture and the Christian tradition, a divorce that springs, in its present form, from the Renaissance and the Reformation, but more deeply from the chronic disharmony of fallen nature and the realm of grace. I venture the opinion that Catholic scholars and thinkers are doing far more to bridge the intellectual gulf than those of other Christian bodies—though again it may be true that 'Anglo-Saxon' Catholics are playing too small a rôle in the wonderful efflorescence of Biblical scholarship and theology, Church history (and other 'positive' studies) and Christian philosophy that is a feature of twentieth-century Catholicism.

And so we come to the criticism that recurs again and again in this discussion and in others like it: that the Church and her members are intransigent, and that she is domineering and 'totalitarian'. Here a distinction of some importance may be made. There is intransigence of principle and there is the temper of intransigence. And doubtless intransigence of principle is only too likely to be made an excuse for an intransigent temper. The intransigent temper is an unlovely and unchristian thing. It is the temper that goes by nature with sectarianism and it seems to be indeed 'clean contrary to the spirit of the Gospel' (see p. 43 of the pamphlet); it is contrary to charity. Can it be denied that it is a commoner failing among Catholics today than among Protestants? To say that this is because Catholics still maintain, what Protestants have in so large a measure discarded, intransigence of principle, is to make an excuse but hardly to offer a justification. Perhaps we might all take as our models in this matter the spirit

and temper of St. Francis of Sales, Newman and von Hügel.

But the real object of the criticism levelled against us in this connexion by non-Catholic Christians is not our regrettable lapses into intransigence of temper but our deliberate maintenance of intransigence of principle. What is really disliked is the Church's affirmation that she alone is the legitimate inheritor of the Gospel, that she alone has the charism of indefectibly true doctrine, that she is the only authorized dispenser of the sacraments and of public corporate worship, and that all men are bound, objectively speaking, to belong to her fold and submit to her authority: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Here, of course, there can be no yielding on the part of the Church or of us her children. Nor on the other hand is such an article as this the occasion to prove the validity of this the Church's claim. Still, it does seem relevant to point out that such intransigence, so far from being 'clean contrary to the spirit of the Gospel' is typical of the New Testament and of our Lord Himself. St. Peter, in the Acts, asserts that elsewhere than in 'Jesus Christ the Nazarene' salvation is not to be found, and that His alone 'of all the names under heaven has been appointed to men as the one by which we must needs be saved' (iv, 12); in other words, *extra Christum nulla salus*, a most intransigent assertion. The Anglican scholar Dr. Sparrow Simpson stated in the *New Commentary* (S.P.C.K.) that for St. Paul the distinction between those that are within and those that are without the constitution of the visible Church is fundamental: 'the Church is the object of Christ's love. It is the corporate institution which is redeemed'—in other words, *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Our Lord Himself, we read in St. John's Gospel (iv, 22), speaking to a Samaritan woman about the schismatical Samaritan worship of Mount Gerizim, said 'You' Samaritans 'worship you cannot tell what, we' Jews 'worship knowing what it is we worship'; and in St. Matthew's Gospel (xv, 24) we read that he said: 'My errand is only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'. As to His own position as the one mediator—an intransigent doctrine—He said: 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son and those to whom it is the Son's good pleasure to reveal Him' (xi, 27). As regards the Church we are told that He laid down the principle of excommunication (xviii, 17) and added that whatever the apostles bound on earth would be bound in heaven. The only form of religion authorized by the New Testament is the religion of an authorized and authoritative society, of which *quicumque vult salvari*

must become a member. Catholics are thoroughly biblical and evangelical in maintaining that this society still exists and is still the one divinely ordained ark of salvation.

And so I would go further and suggest that the opposition aroused by this intransigence, in so far as it is an opposition to intransigence *as such*, does not rest upon a Christian foundation at all, and is not an expression of charity. Christianity has always maintained that truth is one and that it is inconsistent with the manifold forms of error. It has always, too, when faithful to its Gospel source, maintained that it possesses this truth, that it can formulate it, and that it can in consequence condemn error. The hostility to this contention springs not from Christian charity but—deep down, and often no doubt all unbeknown to those who share it—from historical and philosophical relativism and agnosticism. It springs in the last analysis from the human spirit's horror of encountering the Absolute within the temporal process. Today it rejects the Church's infallible voice as a mediaeval anachronism. Yesterday it inspired Pilate's words to Christ: 'What is truth?' The day before yesterday it was making terms with the Baals of Canaan and persecuting the prophets of the unique God self-revealed on Sinai.

Now I find that after deprecating the intransigent temper I have equated our non-Catholic fellow-Christians with Jezebel! I am sorry. I only mean to suggest that the claims of absolute truth, whenever published in the world's market-places and academies, must arouse the bitterest hostility or amused laughter until they are accepted, or are by way of being accepted. I can understand and sympathize with the non-Catholic Christian who honestly sees in 'Rome' the scarlet woman of the Apocalypse. For her claims are indeed such that they must be either tremendously true or abominably false. I am not sure that it is not harder to sympathize with the man who has 'a great respect' for the Catholic Church but will not accept the 'obedience of faith'.

Yet with these also it is necessary to sympathize. Experience and charity alike dictate that we must regard most practising members of the non-Catholic Christian bodies as 'in good faith' or, to use the unpleasant technical phrase, 'in invincible ignorance'—which does not mean that they are beyond the hope of enlightenment, but only that they are not at present culpably blind. Here again one's memory turns to von Hügel with his naïve and charming comment on an Anglican community of monks following the Benedictine Rule: 'There are no limits to invincible

ignorance'<sup>1</sup>. And from this there follows a most important consequence. We may hope that the majority of Anglicans—to look no further afield—are validly baptized. The grace of baptism is operative as long as the soul remains 'in a state of grace'; and the state of grace, whilst it is only lost by deliberate grave sin, is regained by supernatural contrition (which includes implicitly at least the resolution to seek sacramental absolution, even though in any given case this resolution is not consciously entertained, the obligation of the sacrament of penance being unknown to the soul in question). Now the grace of baptism includes a 'title' to the actual graces that will be needed to enable the soul to move forward on the path of Christian perfection. And all this seems to mean, what common sense and experience teach us, that a great supernatural work may be supposed to be going on *in* a great non-Catholic communion. We may go further, applying the theological concept of 'equivalent grace', and argue that though grace is not given precisely *by* the ministrations of the non-Catholic bodies (except so far as any of them happens to administer valid sacraments), yet it is given by God *on occasion of* such ministrations. All this is analogously applicable where baptism has not been validly received but where we may presume that there has been 'baptism of desire'; and this consideration enables us to look even beyond the horizons of Christendom itself. But it cannot be too emphatically reiterated that the presupposition of all this is that the individuals in question have not consciously, deliberately and with grave malice turned aside from a light that would have led them to the fullness of Catholic truth and to a realization of their obligation to enter the visible unity of the one Catholic communion. And on us there rests the inescapable obligation to try to enlighten our separated brethren and all our fellow-men as to this obligation: *Go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all the commandments which I have given you*. That is our supreme work for the goal of Christian and indeed human unity, the object of our desires as it is the object of the desires of our separated brethren, and the desire of the heart of our blessed Lord Himself.

When Mr. Lee (p. 47 of the pamphlet) writes with passion of Christendom as 'rent with the terrible outward and visible signs of a disrupted and broken inner life' he carries all of us, and Catholics most of all, along with him. But it is not only fair, it is needful if

<sup>1</sup> I have sought in vain for the passage in the *Selected Letters*; but I am sure I am not inventing.

we are looking for the road to reunion, to bear in mind that the scandal of disunity in the West is almost wholly the scandal of the Protestant Reformation. In condemning our divisions Mr. Lee is in fact passing judgement on the historical significance of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Elizabeth and the other originators of schism. Who does not see now that the true reformers were those who understood that reformation could only come from within? Who does not realize the appalling burden of responsibility, the staggering assumption of authority, that a heresiarch or a creator of schism takes upon himself? It may be argued, indeed, that it is of little use to spend time in recalling and lamenting these old forgotten far-off things and battles long ago; as the Special Correspondent put it, rather cryptically, the work of the Reformation 'can never be undone'. But when one is asking how reunion may be attained, these questions of origins are highly relevant. If Luther and his fellows were not, objectively speaking (and we are not reviewing their subjective moral guilt or innocence), justified in disrupting Western Christendom, then all that has been built upon their schismatical acts is without juridical foundation or objective moral justification. The Church maintains with St. Augustine that there is no just cause of schism; that since the time when Christ, who was God's Son and authorized Envoy, was rejected by Jewish officialdom and established a new covenant with His chosen society, no breach of unity has been legitimate. To put oneself at the head of a schismatical movement is in fact to pose as a false prophet, a pseudo-Christ (St. Matthew xxiv). And therefore the only way to reunion is to undo the originating schismatical act by reverting to the visible unity of a Church that has suffered through these defections but is herself, by divine guarantee, indestructible. How much she has suffered was hinted by Father Crehan in the last of the published letters:

Had the English critics of papal authority, from Laud to Gore and Temple, criticized the Roman Church from within, instead of rebuking from without, the English contribution to the development of Catholic doctrine and practice might have been as great in these 400 years as it was in the Middle Ages.

What then of the practical suggestions made to us in *Catholicism Today*? The concluding article<sup>1</sup> retains two of these sugges-

<sup>1</sup> *Caelo tonantem credidimus Iovem*, which Little Tommy, of crossword fame, translated: 'When *The Times* discussed Catholicism we said "By Jove!"' This article showed a much clearer apprehension of the Catholic position than the Article by a Special Correspondent.



tions: (1) theologians of different persuasions should meet privately and publish the results of their deliberations; (2) there should be, when possible, a joint expression of agreement between 'the Churches' on moral questions of contemporary importance, where such agreement exists.

As regards the second suggestion, Bishop Beck's weighty letter threw a douche of cold water on the rather thoughtless optimism with which this proposal is sometimes regarded. In all charity we may mention a specific point of the gravest moral and social importance: contraception. Is it possible for the Catholic body in this country to unite with the other Christian communions in an unequivocal condemnation of this unnatural practice? Is it not the case that the Anglican bishops themselves published a statement which in popular estimation amounts to a condonation of the practice in special circumstances? A great step towards co-operation would be taken if this statement were publicly withdrawn and a satisfactory one substituted for it. And if the substituted statement carried the signatures and authority of the Catholic hierarchy and the Free Church authorities as well as those of the Anglican bishops co-operation would have become a fact.

The other suggestion carries the mind back to the (explicitly unofficial) Malines Conversations, more than once referred to in the course of this correspondence. There can be no doubt that one of the mistakes made at that time was the initiation of discussions without the agreement of the hierarchy of this country—as Cardinal Gasquet pointed out, it was much as though Cardinal Bourne, without any reference to Belgian authorities, had set discussions on foot at Westminster with a view to solving the Flemish-Walloon problem. But less ambitious conferences have from time to time been held in England, and it would be within the competence of ecclesiastical authority to tolerate further experiments of a similar kind. I confess that I should like to join with other Catholics in meeting, for instance, a group of Anglo-Papalists at a series of informal discussions, to see if I could understand a position which appears paradoxical to the point of fantasy, and to see too whether they could not be brought to understand why their continued membership of the Church of England, if they really accept the truth of the Papal claims, seems to us to be at the peril of their souls. In any case, such discussions might strengthen the bonds of mutual charity and this in itself would be no small gain.

Discussions or no discussions, there are two forms of activity

which everyone, Catholic and non-Catholic, can pursue. We can, in the first place, all pray for the restoration of Christian unity on the basis of God's revealed will; and indeed all Christian prayer must surely have that consummation *in voto*. Professor Allison Peers, in an interesting letter in this series, suggested a 'more general and intensive study of the writings of the great contemplatives', and that such study might in part be organized in inter-denominational groups. Contemplative prayer is not an 'extra', unrelated to Christian doctrine and corporate religion. It is a flower that springs from the root of faith, and a study and love of the flower may help many souls to understand what that root of faith is: an apprehension of God revealed in Christ through the mediation of the Church commissioned by Him. One thinks of Father Augustine Baker's method of conversion: not to argue, but to teach the non-Catholic the 'art of mental prayer'. And in more modern times, one thinks of Father Vernon Johnson's description, in *One Lord, One Faith*, of the road which took him from a quasi-direct confrontation with the supernatural in the great contemplative of Lisieux to reconciliation with the Church that had provided the conditions for her sanctity.

Secondly—and here again I revert to von Hügel—we can all try to understand more deeply the interdependence and the life-giving tension of those three great 'moments' in human religion: God, Christ, the Church. We can meditate upon the fact, pointed out by St. Thomas Aquinas, that although the existence of God can be known with certainty apart from revelation, yet for most of us it is only through contact with revelational religion that this truth is firmly and constantly held. It is not without significance that philosophic monotheism has rarely been attained and maintained at any point in the known history of mankind apart from the influence of the great religions. Thus no one would deny the truth in Mr. Lee's letter in this series, namely that an ultimate faith is far more important than 'agreement upon moral issues', or that belief in God is the heart of such an ultimate faith. But we should say that experience and psychology teach us that a pure faith in God needs normally the support of historical religion.

Thus our sense of the basic need of faith in God takes us to revelation, and so to Christ, the image of the invisible God, the Word of God incarnate. And our need of Christ points us, in its turn, to the great incorporations of the Christian religion, the historic Christian communions, in which faith in Christ is in fact kept



alive in man. These historic communions, however, are not interchangeable, not repetitive examples of the same thing. Each is a unique historical phenomenon, actually or by tendency a society, and actually or by tendency endowed with the properties of a religious society: rites, liturgy, doctrinal tradition, hierarchy, authority, jurisdiction. Each functions by reason of a virtual claim to be *the* Christian society; in so far as this claim is only embryonic or on the other hand has lost its former vigour, to that extent the particular communion's power to fulfil the Church-function in regard to its members is inhibited—its power, that is, to direct and unite them efficaciously to Christ and in Christ to God.

It is along this line of thought, familiar to those who have made a deep and unprejudiced study of von Hügel, that great thinker and deeply religious man, that we can all hope to realize that the Catholic Church's 'intransigence' is not sectarian self-sufficiency, but is a measure of its right—its *probable* right, the non-Catholic inquirer will at this stage interject—to be considered *the* Church of Christ. And so we may hope that more and more individuals, convinced that a highest Common Factor of belief is no substitute for a concrete historical incorporation of religion, will be brought to the threshold of Catholic faith. That threshold can only be crossed by the help of God's grace; but from him who, arrived at this stage, does what is in him by prayer and obedience to his conscience, grace will not be withheld.

There is one final appeal which I would make to our non-Catholic friends. It has been urged, though not in this correspondence, that we Catholics are 'too logical', and it is argued that charity is superior to logic. There may be some reason to distrust an apparently rational deduction which deserts the area of history and experience in which its inferences might be checked. But we would ask those who do not yet agree with us to recognize that our 'logic' is the logic of Christian and religious history, and that in the end there is no divorce between reason and charity. For God's truth and His love are one. Irrationalism is a child of hell, *ubi nullus ordo*. The Church is the incorporation of the truth and charity of God, brought into history by Christ, and because she values unity as a necessary property of this revealed religion, she must maintain those principles, those doctrines and those claims which are at once the fruit and the cause of unity. Her intransigence is the greatest service she can pay to the common cause of Christian reunion.

# ET HOMO FACTUS EST

## The Prerequisites of Christian Unity

By T. S. GREGORY

THE question of Church union lately revived in *The Times* may serve peace and charity by helping to define real frontiers, for confusion is the mother of uncharitableness. In favour of union, reasons are often advanced which evade the real questions—reasons of charity and courtesy and of the desire shared by Christians generally to do the will of God as manifested in Christ, who prayed that 'they may be one even as we are'. Now, every Christian (whatever his denomination) must love his neighbour (whatever his neighbour's denomination) as himself, or, if he would be perfect in the obedience of Christ, 'as I have loved you'. There is therefore no limit to the obligation of charity. The union of Churches cannot add anything to that obligation or subtract anything from it; and if it was ever right to accept a sectarian loyalty, then such loyalty at least provided means to obey the two great commandments. The fact that Christian communions exist is presumptive evidence that the human conscience has found them in their variety and division appropriate instruments of charity. The difficulty lies elsewhere.

In the following pages the divisions are emphasized—perhaps overemphasized—not only to show that they cannot be 'papered over' but to suggest that the real unity can be realized by respecting them, and that no man can be counted alien who is faithful to his faith.

The purpose of union is not a collection of individuals who chance to think alike, but an organism, a living Body. Such a Body cannot derive its life and coherence first and last from its members, as if the hand or the eye were itself the organic principle. The Christian Church is the creation of Christ or nothing; and the Christ who made it is either God or a dead man—a dead religious genius whose creature would be subject as any other society to change or dissent. As the State is the natural asso-

ciation of social man, the Church would thus be the natural worship of religious man. There would be no just cause either in the dead founder's intention or in the nature of such ethical and liturgical society to disturb or supersede the sectarian organization. Rather it would seem wise in answer to the varieties of speech and custom to multiply, not reduce, the varieties of ecclesiastical order. To cut the argument short, the sole ground for thinking our divisions unhappy and seeking union is belief in the deity of Christ and the conviction that being found in fashion as a man He created on earth and in time one community and intended that it should remain one community for ever.

Since the Edinburgh Conference of 1910, whose twelve hundred members were concerned with world-wide questions of evangelization, the non-Catholic Churches have become ecumenical. All the major events in the world were simultaneous for all the world, and if on one side it appeared that brothers are more ruthless than strangers, the good will of Christians also reacted to the change. After the First World War an International Missionary Council was established, and before the Second, a World Council of Churches. A series of Councils at Jerusalem, Madras, Oxford, Amsterdam, Lausanne, Edinburgh and elsewhere confirmed and expressed the concord of Protestant communities and urged them to be rid of their unhappy divisions. The Student Movement acquired a fine technique of charity and understanding to link not only Churches but races and cultures. Missionaries toiled after a common Christendom, especially where ancient European disputes could mean nothing but confusion to their young Churches in other continents. When war cut off these Chinese or African missions from their parents, other Protestant societies maintained them, staffed them and paid for them. Lutheran exiles in Britain and America 'are able,' said Pastor Hildebrandt, 'to keep the ecumenical contacts even during the war, and though a number of them will naturally join in due course one of the English denominations, others will continue to represent the Church from which they came in the old and new German Lutheran congregations in England. This is an essential contribution to the unity of the Churches. . . .'<sup>1</sup>

In all this the motive was an intense and unyielding loyalty to the person of Jesus Christ and a profound conviction that all human need at whatever level is His concern. But

<sup>1</sup> *Is Christ Divided?* Ed. William Temple, p. 48.

it should here be said, with profound regret, that in the movement for unity and co-operation the Church of Rome has taken no share. . . . It is understood by Protestants and non-Romans generally that the dogmatic basis of the Roman Communion is such that co-operation with other Churches as Churches is not possible to it. For that reason the informal collaboration of individual Roman Catholic scholars and others is all the more welcomed.<sup>1</sup>

In that sentence a Catholic might dispute the word 'understood'; for innumerable *obiter dicta* of Protestant clergy, no less than the movement of Protestant history, leave no room to doubt that Catholic 'exclusiveness', or, as some call it, 'sectarianism', is not understood. And yet the Catholic position is clear enough. What do these Councils, this Ecumenical Movement, imply? The ecumenical union of Protestant bodies was to be achieved in a succession of conferences and co-operations between Christian leaders whose idea of God conflicted as irreconcilably as Karl Barth and the Bishop of Birmingham. They were to succeed where Christ and His Apostles had apparently failed. The union depicted in the Gospel of St. John had somehow come to grief and was to be restored by the wisdom and on the initiative of meetings such as these. There in Galilee and Jerusalem (so the Catholic believes) God Himself was present in the flesh. The community selected by His eternal wisdom had seen Him risen from the dead. The Apostles, whatever their ordination, had an experience which admitted no dispute, and of such authority that all Christianity stands or falls with it, Protestant and Catholic alike. Their commission and ordination was immediately from the breath and word of the Incarnate Lord. They were at one as witnesses of the Alpha and the Omega, who was dead and is alive for evermore. Who was from the beginning, whom they handled, who is the same yesterday, today and for ever. He had given them His Breath and made them members of His Body. The Christ whom they knew 'man to man' was the consummation of time, the Word by whom all things were made, the Judge and the Redeemer of the universe. And after a pitiful two thousand mortal years we are invited to believe that this community of the Incarnate God and His Apostles had fallen to pieces within a few decades of its creation, and could then be mended in such a world as ours by the good offices of these good men whose knowledge of the Apostolic age was a historian's reconstruction, while some of them even doubted whether the Founder was God or Man, dead or alive.

<sup>1</sup> *Is Christ Divided?*, p. 19.

It was too much. Such a Church founded by such a hand was indestructible, or else it was irreparable. There could be no hope of a divine institution in which God had failed. If He had understood so little of His creatures as to create a Church on earth which could not survive their ignorance and self-sufficiency, a Church that perished of the sins it existed to redeem, a Church that lost its command upon its members through the sin of its officers—if the Church of Christ on earth is the kind of thing these movements of conciliation imply, then it is not the divine community, and its founder is not the divine Lord. Suppose that this Ecumenical Movement succeeds, whose will be the success? If the restored Church is of God, will it require, as the Roman communion does, the obedience of its members? Or, after a few generations, will it be compelled to admit the validity of division once more? Will private judgement still be free to create new sects and propound new dissents? Or will the new Church be endowed with some holier See and a grace withheld from the Apostles to speak infallible truth?

Take a second example of an ecclesiology which the Catholic must reject on grounds equally simple. Harnack says:

In the apostolic age Christians believe that they belong to a real superterrestrial commonwealth which from its very nature cannot be realized on earth. The heavenly goal is not yet separated from the idea of the Church: there is a holy Church on earth insofar as Heaven is her destination. Every individual congregation is to be an image of the heavenly Church. . . . All the lofty designations which Paul, the so-called Apostolic fathers and Justin gathered from the Old Testament and applied to the Church relate to the holy community which originates in Heaven and returns thither.

Then he sees a fall, a contraction, a legalism. This, he says, was a result of the situation of the communities in the world in general and of the struggle with the Gnostics and Marcion in particular; and though it was a fatal error to identify the Catholic and Apostolic Churches, this change did not take place without an exalting of the Christian spirit and an awakening of its self-consciousness.

And he enumerates six reasons for qualifying his judgement that the 'change' had been a corruption, as follows:

First, the new conception of the Church was not an hierarchical one.



Secondly, the idea of the union and unity of all believers found here magnificent expression.

Thirdly, the development of the communities into one solid Church also represents the creative power of the Christian spirit.

Fourthly, through the consolidation effected in the Church by the rule of faith, the Christian religion was in some measure preserved from enthusiastic extravagances and arbitrary misinterpretation.

Fifthly, in consequence of the regard for the Church founded on the doctrine of faith, the specific significance of redemption by Christ as distinguished from natural religion and that of the Old Testament could no longer be lost to believers.

Sixthly, the independence of each individual community had a wide scope, not only at the end of the second, but also in the third century.

Finally, he complains that 'about 220 Calixtus, a Roman Bishop, started the theory that there must be wheat and tares in the Catholic Church', and concludes that 'departure from the old idea of Church appears completed in this statement'.

Harnack seems almost aware that in calling it a 'fatal error to identify the Catholic and Apostolic Churches' he is perverting his own evidence. The fifth of the articles quoted above, 'the specific significance of redemption by Christ as distinguished from natural religion and that of the Old Testament', would appear to be the 'specific significance' of Christianity itself. The Church of the New Testament is indeed a heavenly commonwealth, but in what sense is it true or even plausible that it cannot be realized on earth? Was Christ on earth? Did the Apostles depart from earth as soon as they realized their citizenship in Heaven? Was Ephesus or Rome or Golgotha or Galilee on earth? Where was the empty grave? And what was the holy community doing in such a city as Corinth? For example: 'We all with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord, the Spirit.' Now there, of a truth, is the 'superterrestrial commonwealth'. To visualize the Apostle's conception we need some Dante trained in Apocalypse. Proceeding from the Father and the Son, the Spirit informs His Body, the Church, His Body which is His consummate creation, His Body of which we (Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Romans) are members. Thus informed and incorporated, we are carried in the eternal procession between the Father and the Son. Such is the beginning, being and end of the 'superterrestrial commonwealth', and 'we all' being members incorporate in it as it

is moved by the life of the Blessed Trinity reflect that glory and are transformed into that image. But who is writing this? And to whom? The man Paul who in the same epistle tells of his shipwrecks, stonings, scourgings, perils, anxieties, to other men, members of the Church, among whom he has marked grossly terrestrial sins.

From Harnack's premises the natural inference was that the Church, like its Founder, adapted its methods to its task and used legalism where law was needed, that as it was the organism of an incarnate God, it lived not only in Heaven but on earth, and like Him, was found in fashion as a man. But such an argument would never do. Harnack must show at all costs that the Catholic Church is untrue to the Apostolic pattern—at all costs, for otherwise he can find no fault in what he calls 'the Pope's theocracy' and no excuse for the Lutheran complacency which yielded to Bismarck and to a weary succession of secular authorities all they demanded.

The Gospel [said Harnack in his lectures] makes its appeal to the inner man. . . . 'My Kingdom is not of this world': it is no earthly Kingdom which the Gospel establishes. Not only are those words inconsistent with such a political theocracy as the Pope aims at setting up and with all worldly dominion: they go much further and forbid all direct and formal interference with worldly affairs.

He could not foresee how soon and how bitterly German Protestants would reap the harvest of that mystical unrealism which is inherent in Lutheran theology, and which in Bismarck's day had purchased immunity from the *Kulturkampf*. But he might have seen—it is hard to believe that he did not suspect—the ruin of his own argument. For thus he was forced upon the double paradox that the Apostolic Church was first deluded in its supernatural expectation and then unfaithful in its natural common-sense. The Apostolic Church was deceived: the Catholic Church was corrupt. Within living memory of Pentecost, the Church confronted the alternative of ceasing to exist or ceasing to be Christian and she chose to be unChristian. The historian concludes in effect that the Church of the martyrs betrayed them.

Yet unreal as this account of the primitive Church must appear, it is the only account of it available to the liberal historian, who can never make his imagination at home in the mystery of the Incarnate God, and cannot wholly discover the mutual relevance of Heaven and Corinth, Gethesmane and Berlin. He

describes the only Christian society that could accept all the claims of the new sovereign state without protest. A living God who was really incarnate could not be thus secluded in Heaven.

Behind the question of Church is the still open question of the Person of Christ. The critical study of the New Testament from Reimarus to Wrede as Albert Schweitzer examined it, left the Christ of the Gospels as 'One unknown'. In one of the most luminous studies of the last twenty years, Dr. T. W. Manson said that:

The student of the present time (1931) has to choose between the religio-ethical humanitarian and eschatological view of the Gospels. On one view Jesus becomes the pattern religious and social reformer: on the other, a mistaken enthusiast. On one view the Crucifixion is a gross miscarriage of justice comparable to the death of Socrates: on the other it is something which Jesus deliberately sought as part of His mission. On the one view the subsequent history of the Church is the story of the failure either to understand or to live up to the religio-ethical ideal put forward by the prophet of Nazareth: on the other it is essentially the triumph of a mistake made by Jesus in believing that He was the Son of Man spoken of in David and Enoch. The vital question, then, is whether these two alternatives exhaust all the possibilities of the case . . . and one of the leading problems in any such enquiry will be to discover the sense in which Jesus used such terms as 'Kingdom of God' and Son of Man.<sup>1</sup>

And beside these words we may set others written at the same time by Dr. T. R. Glover:

Christianity did capture the ancient world. Wilamowitz says it did so, because of the religions in competition it most successfully Hellenized itself. The phrase by itself is not clear; but if I may put on it my own interpretation of the word Hellenism, I think it gives the real clue. What was Hellenism? Study the progressive development of the mind to Athenian standards. If we may turn the Greek word into something more like ordinary English, Christianity triumphed because it squared with the world's best intelligence, because essentially it liberated the human mind, and gave it a chance to develop to the full range of God's conception for it. We can admit that and we can add that the Christian learnt somehow to be quicker in recognizing new facts than the ordinary Hellenist was . . . Jesus dephlegmatized His followers, fired them with His own originality and inspired them with so independent a spirit, with so moving a sense of the living God beside them and before

<sup>1</sup> *The Teaching of Jesus*, pp. 14, 15.



them, that, over the head of their own traditions of God, they accepted the hint of Jesus to rethink God, and the next thing was that they were quickly ready for St. Paul's interpretation of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

Now grant that Dr. Glover was writing for uninstructed, incredulous and even pagan readers, yet an ordinary Catholic would fail to see anything in this account of Christ that even distantly resembles what he calls the faith. 'God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate'—squared with the world's best intelligence, dephlegmatized his followers, 'they accepted the hint of Jesus to rethink God'. There is no community of meaning, and no linguistic or logical agility could pretend any. A Catholic who began to think as Dr. Glover would cease to be a Catholic. In accommodating that which he would call infidelity he might reasonably fear the sentence in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

For as touching those who were once enlightened and tasted of the heavenly gift and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the powers of the age to come, and then fell away, it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame.

For it is the Son of God whom Dr. Glover seems reluctant to confess, as he seems anxious to forget the 'powers of the world to come' in a chapter devoted to disparaging the apocalyptic beliefs of the primitive Church. And something like that sentence, the Catholic thinks, has been executed, not indeed upon the persons of Protestant believers whom often he venerates as saints, but upon Protestant doctrines. 'If it beareth thorns and thistles, it is rejected and nigh unto a curse, whose end is to be burned.' Dr. Manson was writing in 1930, and it was still a question for students whether Jesus was a social reformer or a mad saint—a question still awaiting the tentative and insecure decision of scholars. Of a truth the Jesus of Dr. Schweitzer's summary was One unknown. What response could the Catholic make but to admire what he would judge to be a despairing loyalty, and conclude that whatever the scholars might determine, the Crucified had left His followers in the dark, worse confounded for the promises He had failed to keep? Is this an evangel? Nor would it comfort him to learn that

<sup>1</sup> *Christ in the Ancient World.*

thousands, perhaps a large majority of Protestant Christians, would repudiate these liberal and learned heresies, and would devoutly and intelligently profess every article of the Nicene Creed, for the heart of his difficulty would be the light shed by such private judgement and irresponsible sincerity on the Maker of men. That differences of human interpretation should multiply and replenish theology seems natural and wholesome, but that the ultimate mystery of human redemption should be left in such uncertainty that the conflation of documents and verbal scrutiny should be needed at this hour to define the doctrine of the Person of Christ at such a level seems to him equivalent to admitting that the Word was not God, that the darkness had overcome the light, that the Word never became flesh and, in sum, that there is no Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God. Moreover, he would point to the number of Protestant Churches as evidence that others had come to the same conclusion before him, that when once the authority of the Church to guard and proclaim revealed truth was overthrown in favour of private judgement, no amount of scientific sincerity could recover the Word of God. The voice which has once defied the authority of the Church can never thereafter claim ecclesiastical authority. The authority once lost is lost for ever, and without it there is only the sincere but necessarily doubtful accent of human induction and surmise. Though on the authority of his private conviction a man professed all the Catholic faith, the nature of that authority would seem to the Catholic indistinguishable from self-deification, and thus to annul the orthodoxy as a contradiction in terms.

A non-Roman who had read thus far would inevitably retort, *Tu quoque*. Roman unity, he might say, is an empty shell. There is more real community between certain types and levels of Catholic, Protestant and Pagan than among the four hundred millions who profess obedience to the Holy See, and more true Christianity among the faithful of all sects than among many neglected Latin populations. This One Holy and infallible Church, founded by the Son of God, conspicuously fails to maintain even a decent level of conduct in its members, except where Protestants are there to set the standard and find the faults. There would have been no Reformation but for sheer wickedness inspired by the occupants of the Holy See, which the Church failed utterly to cleanse, and no reform within the Church itself but out of enmity to the Protestants. The Papal government was always among the worst

offenders. Moreover, it is an insult to the Saviour's grace to hold it as a monopoly for this crowd of unconvincing middlemen, and to maintain an inflexible doctrine of orders which can make priests of criminals and excommunicate saints—as if the Word became flesh in order to confirm the difficulty of believing in the Incarnation with the impossibility of accepting such human mediators. And if once when Rome was the chief of earth she seemed the true seat of the Apostle, does it follow or is it even likely that the Divine economy will always require a Latin vicar of Christ? Above all, is it really credible that the government of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church should have been so designed by the Eternal Wisdom that even at its best it should reveal the worst faults of a bureaucracy and be so heavily encumbered with tradition that it can never really lead the faithful? And so *ad infinitum*.

The significance of all such controversy lies not in the intrinsic validity or invalidity of its charges, but in the demonstration that there is no real prospect of ecclesiastical reunion. The Protestants and Catholics unite in affirming their division. Nor does the road towards union follow the argument of friendly compromise: it runs in the opposite direction. For it is in the division that the faith (whatever it be) comes alive and militant. Whether Protestant or Catholic the One Holy Church in which we believe is the real Church and not a pleasing fiction. We differ in faith, but inasmuch as it is a faith, its object really exists and exists as the consummate expression and instrument of God's love for man. Hence the one road denied us is that which leads to a programme of accommodation as if we were dealing with some human policy or formulation. The Church, like any other real thing, must be obeyed.

It was not founded [says Karl Barth] as the result of a human intuition or in consequence of a human resolution. Neither the genius of individuals nor the instinct or enthusiasm of a crowd created it. No one was asked whether he wanted something in the nature of the Church. No one was endowed with the skill to build it. No one was worthy, no one was not unworthy to set his hand to this task. An Apostle is made, as Paul writes (Gal. i, 1), 'not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised Him from the dead'. It is the act of the exalted Jesus Christ who gave Himself to His own by giving to them His Spirit that makes the Church a fact, an event amongst men . . . a piece of human history.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Barth, *Credo* (Fr. J. S. McNab), p. 140.

Any Christian, Catholic or Protestant, holds his faith upon that supernatural authority as a thing divinely given, not humanly generated. Hence to define his creed as against other creeds, and to delimit the frontiers of a religion, is to declare a faith in the reality of universals and to claim, not only that the Church is supernatural, but that he has a mind to know it. In proportion as the sectarian affirms the divine calling and election of his sect, he must refuse any compromise, and in that refusal claims to rest upon eternal truth. He is not concerned with an idea of God or ideal Man, but with Very God of Very God and with Man as he is. And here in modern as in all wars of the faith, we strike the real battle-field—the verb to be. Here the real unity appears and the dangerous enmity. The origin of all our divisions is a sincere affirmation of truth, and the real heresies of our time deny that any such affirmation can mean anything. They do not use the terms of religious faith even to the extent of denying it, but find a universal contingency or becoming which reduces all thought to a function of appetite, and at last divides all predicates between tautology and uncertainty, mechanism and chaos. It is clear that whatever doctrine of the Church and Sacraments or of the Person of Christ may continue to divide the Christian communities, there would be no division, no controversy, but that all parties think it worth while to maintain some doctrine of the ‘everlasting Yea’. Whatever is, is. In his last book, Dr. Mascall quotes Gilson with strong approval that

the great service rendered to philosophy by the Angelic Doctor was to purge it of the essentialism which ultimately tracing back to Plato had hitherto always more or less overlaid and obscured that emphasis on concrete reality and factual particularity which is altogether central both to Christianity itself, with its proclamation of the supreme significance of one definite historical Figure and a few definite historical events (*passus sub Pontio Pilato crucifixus mortuus et sepultus tertia die resurrexit a mortuis*) and also to the Jewish religion of which Christianity is both the heir and the fulfilment.<sup>1</sup>

It was in this ‘existential’ sense that Newman judged ‘the Establishment’ as unreal, and in the same sense that Wesley attacked Latitude on one side and Calvinian quietism on the other. These characteristic Englishmen were primarily concerned not to define a doctrine but to discern that which is.

<sup>1</sup> *Existence and Analogy*, pp. 44, 45.

This is why [says Newman] religion demands more than an assent to its truth; it requires a certitude, or at least an assent which is convertible into certitude on demand. Without certitude in religious faith there may be much decency of profession and observance but there can be no habit of prayer, no directness of devotion, no intercourse with the unseen, no generosity of self-sacrifice.<sup>1</sup>

Now faith [says Wesley] gives a more extensive knowledge of things invisible . . . in the clearest light, with the fullest certainty and evidence. . . . What Christianity considered as a doctrine promised is accomplished in my soul. And Christianity considered as an inward principle is the completion of all those promises. . . . I do not undervalue traditional evidence. It is highly serviceable in its kind and in its degree. And yet I cannot set it on a level with this.<sup>2</sup>

In the same sense Kierkegaard the Protestant, and Bergson the Jew, attack intellectualist formulae substituted for real eternity and real time. They are both realists. So the Bishop of Oxford finds in St. Thomas the mature Christian doctrine of the *summum bonum* because he was

perhaps the first Christian philosopher to take the corporeal character of human existence calmly. The whole dualist ascetic school of thought [he said] had been frightened of the body and its passions and had tried to make men live like angels. . . . St. Thomas on the other hand insists on saying, Live like men, that is like embodied souls.

Then from the *Summa contra Gentiles* he quotes St. Thomas's vigorous apology for natural science:

It was a grievous error in those of whom Augustine speaks to allege that it mattered not what men thought of the created universe so long as they thought rightly concerning God. For error in the matter of the universe means false opinion about God and leads men's minds away from God (towards whom faith would direct them) supplying them with causes other than God. . . .

By considering what God has made we can first of all catch a glimpse of divine wisdom which has in some measure impressed a certain likeness to itself upon them. . . .

For whatever goodness or perfection is to be found distributed among particular things is all united in Him, who is the Fount of all goodness. If therefore the goodness, beauty and charm of things created can so gain men's affection, the very Fount of goodness, God Himself, when compared with those rivulets of goodness to be

<sup>1</sup> *Grammar of Assent*, p. 220.

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Dr. Middleton, *Works*, X, p. 72.



seen in His separate creatures cannot but inflame our minds and draw them wholly to Himself.<sup>1</sup>

There, in the pupil of Albert the Great, is the doctrine of the early Renaissance. It is the realism of the Bible, as clear in Genesis and Job as in St. Thomas—that intuition of being which refuses the mysticism of escape and the materialism of progress. It is also the commonsense of Christendom and of the religion which alone of the world religions had a materialism of its own. We may add one more quotation. Professor A. E. Taylor's account of religion as 'concerned with something which overpoweringly is'.

The very first heresy [he says] with which the Church was confronted, even before the later of the New Testament writings, such as the First Epistle of John, had been composed was Docetism, the doctrine which resolved the human personality and recorded life of Christ on earth into a long continued symbolic illusion. It is to combat this doctrine, as we know, that the Johannine epistle insists on the denial that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh as the distinguishing mark of an anti-Christ. . . . Docetism in that early age of the Church seems to have spread like wild-fire among the educated and to have been as hard to extinguish. It was the common basis of the whole bewildering growth of half-Christian speculations known as Gnosticism in which a symbolic, theosophic figure is substituted for the historical, human 'Son of the Carpenter'. . . .

It seems to me, then, that the actual history of Gnosticism is a sufficient warning against repetitions of the attempt to divorce the spiritual life, which we know in fact only as mediated by religions with roots in historical facts and happenings, wholly from its historical attachments. At bottom it is an attempt to manufacture God, the most tremendous of all realities out of universals. . . . The process always leaves you with something which may be or should be, or ought to be; and, as Baron von Hügel was fond of saying, No amount of Oughtness can be made to take the place of one Is-ness.<sup>2</sup>

Against the Christian realism with its emphasis on existence, the nineteenth century revived the ancient heresy of essentialism with its train of ideas and definitions. It reinterpreted the figure of the Gospels from every conceivable point of surmise. It preached innumerable sermons. It substituted ideologies and their sentiment of power for faith with its intuition of being. It was the golden age of wishful thinking, and the mightiest prophet in this kind,

<sup>1</sup> Kirk, *The Vision of God*, pp. 384-9, S.C.G., II<sup>2</sup>, II<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> *The Faith of a Moralist*, II, pp. 133-8.

Friederich Hegel, turned all the universe, as his disciples turned the life of Christ, 'into a long continued symbolic illusion'.

The essentialist asks not whether a thing is, but what a thing is. His interest is not *what is* but *what I think*. Thus he confounds logic with reality, and linguistic usage with logic. His process of mind is a continual recession from reality. Potentiality, not actuality; tomorrow, not today; investment, not enjoyment; memory or promise, not contemplation; reforms, doubts, everlasting motion and all history as extended Idea—these are the 'notes' of an essentialist culture, which rests at last on the dogmatic interest or imagination of the human thinker. The essentialist is the soul of controversy and sees everything in terms of dialectic. Thus, as John Morley said of the Oxford Movement, 'there arose once more into active prominence the supreme debate . . . What is a Church? . . . What is the Church of England . . . was the Church a purely human creation?' The demand was for definitions. The new type of party government in like manner exalted opinion, and an earlier generation confronting the political and religious bankruptcy of the Revolution asked the question. What is man? Attempting a timeless and unconditioned definition—as if there could be absolute man.

The loathsome mask has fallen: the man remains,  
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man,  
Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
Over himself, just, gentle, wise but man. . . .

To savour the unconscious irony of Shelley's 'intense inane' we need only the comment of reality. The sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, equal, unclassed, tribeless man of industrial Birmingham:

It is not that the people are immoral, for immorality implies some forethought: or ignorant, for ignorance is relative; but they are animals, unconscious, their minds a blank and their worst actions on the impulse of a gross and savage instinct. There are many in this town who are ignorant of their very names; very few who can spell them. It is rare that you meet with a young person who knows his own age, rarer to find a boy who has seen a book or a girl who has seen a flower. Ask them the name of their sovereign and they will give you an unmeaning stare: ask them the name of their religion and they will laugh; who rules them on earth or who can save them in heaven are alike mysteries. (Sybil.)

Such unclassified humanity 'exempt from awe, worship and degree', exempt, above all, from history, was not a natural product; it was a lab. specimen or text-book illustration of a certain theory; it was the ground or goal of all liberal thinking, and perhaps the half-conscious assumption in most political activity between Shelley's generation and our own. In the old world, civilization had always implied selection, had maintained aristocracy and a scale of value. Thomas Hobbes, indeed, used a mathematical method, and seemed to discover an equality of no value—'the life of man solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short'—but this was only a forensic artifice to enforce his doctrine of social order. Between his egalitarian scepticism and the new egalitarian religion the difference is precisely that the latter is a religion. It extended the franchise, created the modern party system, paralysed the House of Lords; it first established and then abolished the principles of individualism and *laissez-faire*: it equalized educational opportunities, standardized methods and abolished tests; it inspired hatred of monopoly; it displaced persons and dissolved family life. By definition this essential humanity was emancipated from all actual modes of human living. It was pure abstraction. So was the notion of man presupposed in scientific method. 'The aim of science,' as Eddington said, 'is to obtain the element common to all human experience separated from the merely individual elements in that experience.' And what is common to all human experience? We do not know. And how can this common somewhat be separated from its individual elements? Only by certain agreed principles of abstraction which are intended not to discover what *is* but to obtain what *we want*. And what is man? Once it was easy to describe him as *politikon zoon*, for there he was, living in and by means of a *polis*. At various times he had been a tribesman, a citizen the tenant of a feudal lord, the subject of a prince. All these descriptions implied local and particular attributes. When society was a contract, the parties might argue their case before an imaginary tribunal which might be supposed to hear reason and weigh evidence. In the last analysis there was the universal father, Adam in Paradise, and universal judgement at the end of the world. For practical mundane purposes the legal or local description was good enough, and Christendom availed to supplement the particular with a universal. But this ideal or essential humanity sceptreless, uncircumscribed, unclassed and exempt from worship was a new thing, an essential humanity dispensed from the duty



of existing. And when existence was out, any kind of theoretical illusion might come in. So, for example, by inventing economic man as a substitute for real men, the essentialist could devise reforms and administer them by what is fitly named 'machinery of government' and in his world of hypotheses and definitions, statistics and opinions, he remains unconscious of real devastation as he is of real human beings. It was not the theoretical economist but the pious evangelical nobleman who saw the reality of human being hidden under the fiction of economic man.

In Britain this local realism was maintained by a sectarian and parochial Christianity. Local administration was a family affair and the empirical philosophy was justly called English, because it was the English method of tackling existence by refusing to generalize or theorize. The movements known as religious revivals tend always towards concrete and particular reality. 'There can be no more fatal error,' says Thomas Arnold, 'certainly none more at variance with the Scripture model, than to acquaint the mind with the truths of religion in a theoretical form.' 'I insisted,' says John Wesley, 'that orthodoxy or right opinions is at best a very slender part of religion.' 'For thee my words are intended,' says St. Benedict, 'who dost take the all powerful and excellent arms of obedience to fight,' and these might have been the words of William Booth. The sects gave a focus to religion. They were small, organic, selective. They were the schools of moral and intellectual earnestness; latitude came upon them as a mortal disease. The best of their religion was family religion, and it was with a well-cultivated sense of Divine paternity that they attacked social injustice.

'That every man should be persuaded in his owne mind and should doe nothing against or without the warrant of his conscience' was advanced not as a plea for latitude but as a principle of moral realism. And it issued in a doctrine of liberty wholly at variance with the *liberté* of the Revolution, for example, John Wesley:

Is there a God? You know there is. Is he a just God? Then there must be a state of retribution. . . . O think betimes before you drop into eternity. . . . Give liberty to whom liberty is due, that is to every child of man, to every partaker of human nature.<sup>1</sup>

The English philosophy as it appeared in John Locke (the son of a Puritan attorney, pupil of a Puritan theologian, and the

<sup>1</sup> *Thoughts on Slavery.*

doctor of most nonconformist academies during the greater part of a century after the appearance of his Essay, which he wrote under the influence of liberal Calvinists in Holland) translated this sectarian realism into the currency of scientific and European speculation and revealed its strength and weakness. Its weakness was its refusal of reason; its strength was its grasp of particular and concrete facts. It was a nominalist philosophy torn from its real home in the service of a mystical religion. Its quarrel is not with the existentialism of Thomas but with the revived essentialism of pure reason, for example of Spinoza. It had no ground but in the intuition of being and no interest in speculative definitions: its aim was to analyse experience; all Hume's scepticism is given to affirm the necessity and validity of a primal act of faith.

Hence, to sum up, it is not by designing a common formulary that Christian charity could unite the Churches. In the main defence of Christendom, at the human and natural level where the main attack on Christian civilization is delivered, Catholic unity and Protestant division are, as such, already at one, and will discover their community not by a self-conscious policy of ecclesiastical change but by affirming their faith and respecting their affirmation, not by defining the *essence* but by declaring and maintaining the *existence* of the human being, the image of God, and those natural rights and duties which realize and express human being. The Churches will faithfully obey one great end of their creation—but only so long as they preserve untainted and unconfused their own faith and devotion. It would be a disaster if, by tinkering with doctrinal formulae, a good Methodist should lose his 'blessed assurance' or his missionary vocation in return for a doubtful and dishonest accommodation with the Blessed Sacrament. Religiously, such an act would be blasphemous and humanely paralysing. But a Methodist who practised his own religion without compromise could be trusted to ensure (to the extent of his influence) that marriage, if not a sacrament, was yet held sacred, and that education should sustain the integrity of human persons and the dignity of the image of God. There is good ground for thinking that the road to such charity as is the 'bond of perfectness' lies not through the consideration *a latere* of other creeds, but by following the direction of the Son of God who came *down* from Heaven and was made man. The love which moves the Godhead towards humanity must establish the service of man at the heart of any faith that claims to be Christian.

# EUROPEAN LITERATURE & THE LATIN MIDDLE AGES

By CHRISTOPHER DAWSON

EVERY great civilization possesses a sacred language which is the language of religion and scholarship and law. Above all it is the language of the sacred writings which are regarded as the source of all true knowledge and the norm of moral values and social standards. In the past the preservation of this language and literature has been the privilege of a leisured class or priesthood, a privilege which has often been jealously guarded alike against the uninitiated masses and the outside world of the gentiles or the barbarians. Thus every great culture has two aspects—the esoteric tradition of its sacred culture and the vernacular tradition of common life and the common people which is relatively fluid and open to the changing influences of the outer world.

Clearly the gap between these two methods of approach is a very wide one. The China which was seen by the European merchants at Canton was a different world from that discovered by the Jesuit scholars at the court of Kang Hsi; while in India the world of the merchants at Dacca or Calcutta was as different from the Urdu and Persian culture of the Moghul court as that was from the sacred tradition of ancient India represented by the Vedas and by Sanscrit literature. However wide our knowledge of a society may be, it cannot suffice without a knowledge of the classical tradition and the sacred language which provides the key to the cultural cypher.

How far does this principle hold good of our own Western tradition of culture? For a thousand years and more it is clear that Latin was the sacred language of the West in the full traditional sense. It was the liturgical language, the language of the sacred writings and the language of the priesthood and the learned class. Nevertheless its position is not quite the same as that of Sanscrit in India or Arabic in Islamic culture. It acquired its sacred character, as it were, by adoption, since its sacred writings are translations from Greek and Hebrew originals, and it first attained universal currency, not as a sacred tongue, but as the official language of the pagan world empire before its consecration by the Christian Church. But though this may detract from the religious prestige of Latin as the sacred language of Christendom,

it increases its cultural importance. The rise of Latin Christendom did not break the continuity of the older literary tradition and the old classical literature maintained its position as a second canon, in addition to the ecclesiastical canon of the sacred writings of the Church.

Western culture and European literature arose out of the unity and diversity of this twofold tradition, and every vernacular literature from the age of Caedmon to that of Goethe has been born and nourished from this common source.

But this continuity of Western culture has hitherto been largely ignored or misunderstood by modern philology and literary history owing to the neglect of mediaeval Latin, which alone provides the organic link between classical and vernacular literature. It has been a lost world which has been forgotten by all save a few antiquaries and mediaevalists like Ducange and J. A. Fabricius in the past and Manitius and Traube in our own days.

At first sight it seems inexplicable that the immense advance of modern scholarship, which has revolutionized our knowledge of the past during the last 150 years, should have thrown so little light on this central and all-important field of study. Actually, however, modern historiography and the new sciences of comparative philology and literary history have been so closely bound up with the naturalization of Western culture that it is not surprising that a subject which is inherently unassimilable by the nationalist ideologies should have been neglected and depreciated.

Thus the appearance of Dr. E. R. Curtius' great book on *European Literature, the Latin Middle Ages*<sup>1</sup> is not only important on account of its intrinsic value as a work of literature and scholarship, but also as the herald of a change in the spirit of the age—a sign that the centrifugal movement of modern nationalism is losing its force and that the tide is turning at last in the direction of unity.

It is high time that such a change took place. The disasters of the last fifty years which threaten to destroy Western civilization have been due to the revolt of the nations against Europe, and that revolt has been the fruit of the intellectual and spiritual alienation from the European tradition which was the characteristic feature of the nineteenth-century culture.

But as Dr. Curtius himself has shown in his *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* (1932), this tendency has proved no less fatal to national culture than to that of Europe as a whole. In proportion as the nations emancipate themselves from the European tradition, they destroy the roots of their own higher culture. The European nations can only exist as members of a European community of culture. If the latter is destroyed, its place will not be taken by a number of autarkic national cultures, but by a

<sup>1</sup> E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und Lateinisches Mittelalter* (A. Francke, Bern, 1948).

technocratic mass society. The situation of Western culture today has often been compared with that of the ancient world during the last centuries of the Roman Empire. Rostovtzeff, in particular, has drawn a striking parallel between the situation of the urban tax-paying class under the later Empire and that of the modern bourgeoisie under the socialist state.

But the differences are at least as important as the resemblances. The Roman world was confronted by external perils and the gradual decline of population and wealth, but there was no technological revolution and no positive transformation in the relation of man to his environment. On the other hand the barbarian conquest represented neither an intellectual nor a moral victory over the Roman world. There was no break in the continuity of literary culture. On the contrary the barbarians accepted the spiritual hegemony of Rome and became the pupils of the Latin grammarians and rhetoricians.

This process of education was carried on for eight centuries from the days of Servius and Macrobius and Priscian through the Latin Middle Ages down to the appearance of a new classical literature in the *Divina Comedia* of Dante. It is an achievement worthy to be compared with that of the Confucian scholars of China. But while the latter have never been without honour in their own country, the scholars of the West who kept alive the lamp of Latin culture through the dark ages received scanty recognition from the men who owed most to their labours.

No doubt there are reasons for this. The Latin literature of the Middle Ages is a literature of schoolmasters which has little to attract the modern reader. Nevertheless the same thing might have been said a century ago about mediaeval philosophy, which was also a 'scholastic' tradition. In spite of that we have seen a revival of interest in scholastic philosophy which has produced a renaissance of mediaeval studies in this field, and is it not possible that a similar process of revaluation may take place with regard to mediaeval scholarship?

Signs of such a change are already to be seen in Dr. Clement Webb's editions of John of Salisbury and in Haskins' and De Ghellinck's studies of twelfth-century culture. But hitherto no one has attempted to deal with the subject as a whole or to trace the history of the rhetorical and poetic tradition which provides the key to the continuity of the Western literary tradition.

The art of rhetoric has lost its prestige in modern culture, indeed the rhetorician is as unpopular today as the schoolmen and the scholastic philosophy were in the eighteenth century. Yet even a very slight acquaintance with ancient culture should be enough to convince us of the absurdity of this prejudice. For rhetoric and poetry share the same birthright. They are the twin children of the Hellenic genius and for more than 2000 years they have governed the development of Western



culture and defined the forms of Western literary expression. And of the two it has been rhetoric even more than poetry that has been the great agent of the transmission of the higher culture. It is impossible for an unprejudiced critic to read Quintilian without recognizing the source of Western humanism and of the educational tradition which was still living and life-giving in the seventeenth century. No doubt Quintilian was beyond the range of the average mediaeval scholar. The main stream of tradition ran at a much lower level through the textbooks of the grammarians who handed on their 'art' without a break from the schools of the later empire to the monasteries and the episcopal schools.

But however bleak and arid this tradition may seem, it carried with it some knowledge of the *auctores*, and the study of the 'authors' preserved the higher tradition of rhetoric and poetry which flowered anew from age to age throughout the whole course of Western culture. In every century behind the successive revivals of classical culture and the new achievements of the vernacular literatures there persists the unchanging discipline of study—Grammar, Rhetoric and Poetry—which formed the minds of the Roman citizen and the mediaeval clerk and the Renaissance scholar and the eighteenth-century gentleman.

This continuity of educational and literary tradition has never been entirely forgotten—even the men of the Renaissance who were most scornful of the Gothic barbarism of the Middle Ages continued to study and republish the works of the mediaeval Latinists; and nineteenth-century men of letters like W. S. Landor and even politicians like Lord Aberdeen continued to read and appreciate the Latin poets of the Renaissance. In modern times the historians of literature have tended more and more to regard the Latin literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance as a literary curiosity which had no living relation to the development of the vernacular literatures with which alone they were concerned. But if these literatures are but branches of a common stem it is absurd to attempt to understand the part without the whole and to ignore the common background of educational and literary tradition which they all share. As Dr. Curtius writes:

For our purpose we cannot differentiate in tradition between the elements we admire and those we despise. We must consider them as a whole and only then shall we grasp the continuity of European literature. Only then can Antiquity be seen objectively and the Middle Ages freshly appreciated. Then only can we judge how the literatures of modern Europe carry on this tradition, how far they diverge from it and how they have shared the functions of transmission between them during the three centuries from Anerto to Goethe.

It is only in this way that we can come to understand the true nature

of Western culture which is no modern invention of Western man, but stands on the same footing as the great cultures of the East, like China and India, with 3000 years of continuous development behind it. It is true that the tradition of the Western scholar and man of letters is far more fluid and variable than that of the Confucian scholar or the Indian Brahmin, but it is also more dynamic and more capable of assimilating new experience, so that its transmission from age to age and people to people has progressively enriched it.

This is the great paradox of the Middle Ages: that the educated classes of the Northern peoples adopted the alien language of the south and learned to master its style and even its affectations. What an estrangement from its own past! But how richly was it to be rewarded once the vernacular languages had reached maturity.

Thus every vernacular literature repeats the same themes and uses the same forms which have been transmitted to all of them by the common discipline of the Latin *scholastici*—not the scholastic philosophers but the scholastic grammarians and rhetoricians whose tradition was even older and more enduring than that of the philosophers themselves. And the more original a vernacular literature is, the more deeply is it rooted in the common tradition, as Dr. Curtius shows in the case of Dante, the first great classic of the vernacular literatures. For behind every vernacular literature there lies a thousand years of intensive literary training. As the late W. P. Ker used to insist, the most surprising thing about mediaeval Latin literature is not its barbarism but the extraordinary care and affection bestowed on the preparation for literature—Grammar and prosody and the techniques of literary style. And though no one today reads Alan of Lille or Bernard Sylvester for their own sakes, it is impossible for those who read them not to recognize that they were men of the same spiritual race as the ancient rhetoricians and the humanists of the Renaissance—men

*a cui la lingua,  
Lancia e spada fu sempre e targia ed elmo.*

But even when we have grasped this central fact of the continuity of the Latin tradition, there still remains the task of tracing the course of its transmission to the vernacular literatures, and this is a task of infinite complexity, since it was repeated again and again in successive ages. To take a single instance of the simplest kind, Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* was first assimilated by the English vernacular tradition in the ninth century through the work of King Alfred. It was introduced for the second time by Chaucer in the fourteenth century, by John Walton in the fifteenth, and in the sixteenth century by George

Coldwell and by Queen Elizabeth. The same process of transmission was going on at the same time in the other vernacular literatures and the process was complicated by the fact that the different vernacular traditions influenced one another as we see in the case of Chaucer's version and the earlier French translation by Jean de Meun. Nor is this all. We also have the Latin imitations of Boethius, such as Alan of Lille's *Complaint of Nature* and Gerson's *Consolation of Theology*, each of which in turn had a wide influence on the vernacular literatures, as we see in the case of the *Romance of the Rose* which was itself the starting-point of another stream of literary tradition.

But Dr. Curtius is not content with these familiar paths of literary research, he carries the inquiry a step further by analysing the material contents of this common tradition, above all the *Topoi* or *argumenta* which for a thousand years and more furnished the poet and the man of letters with the material of his art. He shows how the modern literary historian is continually being led astray by his failure to recognize these venerable 'commonplaces' owing to his ignorance of their persistence throughout the Middle Ages in this Latin tradition until the day when a Dante or a Shakespeare or a Calderon puts the stamp of his genius upon them and gives them a new currency in modern literature. It is only by a patient and meticulous analysis of this kind that we can gain a true insight into the internal structure of literary tradition.

Nor is the result of this inquiry simply a matter for the philological expert. For in the last resort the survival of European culture depends on the extent to which we preserve a sense of the whole—that communion with the living past which is the unifying principle in every civilization. At the present time the world is undergoing a process of change more far-reaching than anything recorded in past history. New world languages are taking the place of the old sacred languages of Church and study. The old humanist culture is being replaced by the scientific order which transforms the whole of human existence from without by a technological revolution.

If, during this period of change, the internal unity of European culture should be lost and its continuity broken, the new world civilization must suffer such intellectual and spiritual impoverishment that it will become hardly distinguishable from barbarism. The experiences of the present generation are enough to show us how strong are the forces of barbarism in Europe itself and how precarious is the balance on which our civilization rests. Nevertheless it is too soon to despair. The internal resources of Western culture are not exhausted; they have been neglected but they have not been destroyed. And Dr. Curtius' book is here to remind us that there are still *Zionswächter* in the land to keep the walls of the city and to preserve the foundations of our cultural inheritance.



# THE 'MÉMORIAL' OF BLAISE PASCAL<sup>1</sup>

By ROMANO GUARDINI

OUR study of Pascal begins with the analysis of a short text. This text is at the same time one of the most powerful expressions of religious experience which have come down to us. It is generally known as the *Mémorial*. No more than a note which scarcely covers one page of a book, it was found after Pascal's death, sewn inside his jacket, and written twice in his own handwriting. The first copy was jotted down on paper, the second written on parchment in a clear hand with the inverted commas carefully marked.<sup>2</sup>

The care with which Pascal treated this 'memento' is proof of its importance to him, for whenever he had a new jacket made, he always went to the trouble of sewing in these sheets of writing himself. The problem is, therefore, to discover to what stage of his life these sheets belonged.

Pascal is recognized as one of the greatest minds of the world, yet when he died in 1662, he was barely thirty-nine years old. His writings deal with many different subjects, mathematics, logic, philosophy, paedagogy, theology, and in the critical edition they form an imposing row of volumes. As fate would have it, most of them have remained in fragmentary form.

Pascal was a man of great spiritual ardour. He was a deep thinker with an approach at once broadminded and courageous, yet at the same time not divorced from life. His abstract thought was inextricably interwoven with concrete reality; his clear and logical theories had a sound empirical basis. These theories, in their turn, in the form of a keen and controlled observation and sound experiment, paved the way for his philosophic experience.

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Romano Guardini's book, *Christliches Bewusstsein. Versuche ueber Pascal*. (Verlag Jakob Hegner, Leipzig, 1935.)

<sup>2</sup> I am quoting from the pocket edition of *Pensées et Opuscules*, edited by Léon Brunschvicg, 6th ed., Paris, 1912. For the *Mémorial*, cf. p. 142. The paper manuscript has been preserved; the parchment manuscript exists only in a faithful transcription by Abbé Périer.

His intellect, with its sure instinct, could penetrate to the heart of a problem, and knew how to extract the essential and to explain their significance clearly and thoroughly. A no less clear and penetrating style was his medium of expression, as Strowski puts it—'*ce style âpre, noble, sobre, ardent, concentré, impétueux et magnifique*'. From early childhood, however, this genius had been the victim of ill-health. With the exception of the three early works of his youth which will be mentioned shortly, all that he wrote, he wrote at the expense of his delicate constitution. It would be difficult to find greater devotion to an idea, deeper passion for all that concerns the intellect, or a more powerful mind. The centre of this man's life is the *Mémorial*: it is in this light that its meaning becomes clear.

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The philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard has already made us familiar with the idea of 'the stages of life'. According to this theory the life of man runs in a succession which consists of various stages. Life receives its meaning to the extent to which this concept of succession is clearly and fully realized. This does not happen by a mere process of growth and extension, but by a series of courageous decisions. The order of succession is composed of planes of existence. The man who finds his existence on these different levels, is always the same person. Yet he cannot attain to the higher level of existence simply by living on. Man does not develop independently of his own efforts which would be the case if these levels of existence represented simply a quantitative change. On the contrary, the difference between them is qualitative, so that man reaches the greater heights of yet another existence only by his daring decisions. Thus it is not a question of approach and transition, but of a deliberate choice, of a 'leap' that has to be made. On a certain temporary level man reaches, as it were, its 'edge'; the whole level has been thoroughly experienced. At first dimly, then more clearly and more pressingly, comes the awareness of a higher level. Finally, he finds himself face to face with the problem as to whether he dare proceed further. And not only is he aware of the existence of that higher plane which lies before his very eyes, but actually he is allowed to share in it and behold it only from the moment he makes his decision. The greater his daring, the more is granted to him. Let us suppose that he has been living full of spontaneous idealism, in sensitive contact with the world and inspired by the beauty of things. Suddenly

he becomes aware of the real meaning of 'personality', of its loneliness, its responsibility, its seriousness; he also perceives that it stands higher than any immediate contact with life and culture. Thus he reaches the 'edge' of his old plane of existence, senses the new one, and feels himself beckoned towards it. To satisfy this demand, he must leave the present plane and leap on to the next. It is indeed leaping that is required, for as long as he is still on the old plane there is no guarantee of his being able to gain a foothold on the new one which is of a higher nature and therefore 'different'. It is bound to mean a risk, for between the two planes lies a deep and dark gulf. In taking this important step man must exercise complete self-control, he must raise himself above himself and fling himself across the gap. Then he will gain his foothold and begin to live anew; his outlook will become wider; a new sense of values will awake in him which will enable him to worship and to love on a higher level than before. Thus the life of every vital human being is composed of planes of existence and of daring decisions before each one of them; (or, to change the metaphor) it is composed of stages each of which has its own value and its peculiar tasks; in their total, the co-ordinated potentialities of one concrete human being are realized.

Such a theory is not without its dangers. It offers a temptation to superimpose a preconceived pattern upon life, especially so if a fixed succession of planes and, therefore, of 'leaps' is maintained. To avoid this danger, it is well to recall the vitality of life for which rules can be applied only if allowance has been made for its unique aspects. Moreover, the theory in question tends to ignore the continuity of life and thus threatens to split up existence. Nevertheless there is much in it that is true, and there are men for whose life it provides the guiding light. To these belongs Pascal. It is through the *Mémemorial* that we become aware of that glimmer beckoning Pascal to the highest plane of his existence, and the leap he took to reach it.

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Blaise Pascal was born on 19 June, 1623, at Clermont. He lost his mother at the age of three and grew up in the company of his two sisters Gilberte and Jacqueline.<sup>1</sup> In his father's house he was

<sup>1</sup> He thus belongs to those who have grown up without the all-embracing influence of a mother's love and whose hearts have therefore always remained homeless, as it were. Greatest of these is Dante. The example of St. Augustine shows us how much such people have missed and what effort is demanded of them to compensate for their loss.

surrounded by great affection and the dignity and comfort which was in keeping with his father's position made their home the centre of hospitality. It was, moreover, an atmosphere imbued with the spirit of science and mathematics.

When the children were still young, the father moved to Paris. There the Pascal household became one of the most important centres of scientific endeavour. At the same time the family came into contact with the court. The brilliant brother and sister, Blaise and the charming Jacqueline, made a great impression there, especially on Cardinal Richelieu.

From his earliest childhood religion had never been neglected in the family. Pascal's father, owing to an accident which kept him for a long time in retirement, had come into contact with the new religious movement of Jansenism which, consistent to an exaggerated degree, placed all the emphasis on the primacy of grace. It was then that Jacqueline was so deeply impressed that a few years later she entered the abbey of Port-Royal. Pascal too was stirred, but this 'first conversion' did not reach his innermost self. Science and the 'world' to which he had found entrance proved as yet too strong. A long letter which he wrote to his sister after his father's death, alluding to this event in terms of religion, is strangely unemotional. The language of his writing on mathematics is more personal than that in which he describes an event so close to his heart.

Nevertheless his mind was at work; he became restless. The aspects of reality he saw, the values he knew, and the tasks which thence arose, were all put to the test. He began to feel that there was something higher and that he was being drawn nearer to God. Yet all this was not clear enough and not real enough for a questioning mind like his to balance up against the other reality.

A period of hard struggle began full of torment, for all the thoughts that pushed their way to the foreground were as yet dark and unformed. Meanwhile his illness gave him no respite, and it is perhaps to this time that we can ascribe his fervent 'prayer to God to be granted the right use of illness'.<sup>1</sup>

This crisis reached its climax and at the same time resolved itself on that evening of 23 November, 1654, when God became for Pascal the centre of reality itself. Then the relation of the living God to man and to nature became clear to him. That is the experience expressed in the *Mémorial*.

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées et Opuscules*, pp. 56 ff.

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From that moment Pascal acknowledged the existence of a new plane of reality, not of a religious, but more important still, of a Christian nature. At the basis of this new plane of reality was God as He is revealed to men through the incarnation. The challenge of God and His word became clear to Pascal and he began in all seriousness to respond to this challenge.

He was by this time thirty-one and commenced the life of fervent devotion which has made him one of the great Christians. Once more he had found himself faced by a new reality. Once more he showed himself great enough to avoid the temptation of clinging to the concepts, criteria, and methods he had applied in his former phase of thought. All that had gone before remained, and the interest in physics and the human intellect was maintained; in these subjects his work proceeded with the former appropriate methods. Nevertheless the new plane of existence stood above it all, based on a new experience, determined by a new scale of values, and with a new character won and maintained by one particular act. His task was now to find right departures of inquiry and the right methods of thought.

It is in this exactness of his qualitative distinctions which he combined with the most powerful urge for unity, and in the breadth of his spiritual compass whose content is, however, illuminated by an astonishing clarity, that the peculiar nature and greatness of Pascal's thought rests. An example of this is the splendid fragment 793 from his *Pensées*:

The infinite distance between body and mind is a symbol of the infinitely more infinite distance between mind and charity; for charity is supernatural.

All the glory of greatness has no lustre for people who are in search of understanding.

The greatness of clever men is invisible to kings, to the rich, to chiefs and to all the worldly great. The greatness of wisdom, which is nothing if not of God, is invisible to the carnal-minded and to the clever. These are three orders differing in kind. Great geniuses have their power, their glory, their greatness, their victory, their lustre, and have no need of worldly greatness, with which they are not in keeping. They are seen, not by the eye, but by the mind; this is sufficient.

The Saints have their power, their glory, their victory, their lustre, and need no worldly or intellectual greatness, with which they have no affinity; for these neither add anything to them, nor take away anything from them. They are seen of God and the angels, and not of the body, nor of the curious mind. God is enough for them.



Archimedes, apart from his rank, would have the same veneration. He fought no battles for the eye to feast upon; but he has given his discoveries to all men. Oh! how brilliant he was to the mind!

Jesus Christ, without riches, and without any external exhibition of knowledge, is in His own order of holiness. He did not invent. He did not reign. But He was humble, patient, holy, holy to God, terrible to devils, without any sin. Oh! in what great pomp, and in what wonderful splendour He is come to the eyes of the heart, which perceive wisdom.

It would have been useless for Archimedes to have acted the prince in his books on geometry, although He was a prince.

It would have been useless for our Lord Jesus Christ to come like a king, in order to shine forth in His Kingdom of holiness. But He came there appropriately in the glory of His own order.

It is most absurd to take offence at the lowliness of Jesus Christ, as if the lowliness were in the same order as the greatness which He came to manifest. If we consider this greatness in His life, in His passion, in His obscurity, in His death, in the choice of His disciples, in their desertion, in His secret resurrection, and the rest, we shall see it to be so immense, that we shall have no reason for being offended at a lowliness which is not of that order.

But there are some who can only admire worldly greatness, as though there were no intellectual greatness; and others who only admire intellectual greatness as though there were not infinitely higher things in wisdom.

All bodies, the firmament, the stars, the earth and its kingdoms, are not equal to the lowest mind; for mind knows all these and itself; and these bodies nothing.

All bodies together, and all minds together, and all their products, are not equal to the least feeling of charity. This is of an order infinitely more exalted.

From all bodies together, we cannot obtain one little thought; this is impossible, and of another order. From all bodies and minds, we cannot produce a feeling of true charity; this is impossible, and of another and supernatural order.

The text is remarkable and deserves a thorough analysis. Three spheres of reality can be distinguished here: *les corps—les esprits—la charité, la sainteté or le surnaturel*. Between them lies *distance infinie* or, more properly, *différence de genre*. The corporeal sphere cannot even produce the smallest act of the mind, nor can even the smallest sign of Christian charity arise from all the bodies and minds, for between them lies the qualitative difference of the *autre ordre*. Between the two last mentioned spheres—this is particularly emphasized—lies the difference between natural and supernatural. Each sphere has its own set of values, its *grandeur*, but they are different in quality and therefore the scale of values and char-



acteristics of the one can never be applied to the other. Comprehension of each thus requires specific categories and these must be found in the subject itself. This, however, is only possible when the specific power of vision is present, *la vue*, which must be focused anew at each stage. This is why the kings and the rich and all *grands de chair* cannot by themselves see the *grandeurs spirituelles*; why the *gens d'esprit* on the other hand have no understanding for the *grandeur de la sagesse* for which *charité* and *sainteté* are required. Thus we have *trois ordres différent de genre*.

Such clarity cannot be surpassed. Especially significant, however, is the fact that the third sphere of reality thus gained is not given up to irrational experience and intuition. On the contrary, this sphere too possesses its rationality and is therefore not inaccessible to knowledge. Just as nature has its own logical structure which is based on the *sciences abstraites*, mathematics and physics, and as the human sphere too has its logical structure so that it can be rationally comprehended by an *étude de l'homme*, so is there a logic in the spheres of wisdom and charity derived from the Revelation. Attempts to trace this logic are noticeable in many parts of Pascal's writings, for example in his efforts to clarify the problem of grace, especially in his earliest *Lettres à un Provincial*, deepened in the last two (the seventeenth and eighteenth), and in the *Écrits sur la grâce*; the categories of thought are sought in a dialectic between freedom and motive, between causality of grace and human initiative. Or in the *Entretien avec M. de Saci*, in which possible fundamental human attitudes—the sceptic and the stoic, Montaigne and Epictetus—are confronted in such a way that they subject each other to mutual criticism. The object of this method, however, is not to produce a harmonious blend of philosophical theories, but to demonstrate the insufficiency of mere man. Between those two contrasted philosophies there is a vacuum, and to those with eyes to see it is clear that here, in the *misère de l'homme*, God's love shows its mercy to those who are lost.<sup>1</sup> Here belong the attempts in the *Pensées* to make a dialectic of the Old and New Testaments, his treatment of the phenomenon of miracles and its meaning for the history of Christianity, etc. In the remains of his letters to Mlle de Roannez the majesty of Christian values shines forth. The *Lettres à un Provincial* reveal the struggle which he waged for decisive points of Christian existence as he understood it. This struggle was not always a fair one;

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées et Opuscules*, p. 160.

Pascal saw much that is important in false light, simplified much that is complicated, indeed from a certain point all that was poisoned by the agony of the conflict. The devotion, however, the genius, and the courage with which he fought, cannot be over-estimated.

Pascal now entered upon a path into his innermost self. His religious life grew more and more fervent; his thought deepened until it ended in sublime silence. Fragments like the remains of his letters or the wonderful *Mystère de Jésus* from the *Pensées* testify to this development.

\* \* \*

After Pascal's death a discovery was made which is related in the following account:

A few days after the death of Pascal, a servant of the house noticed quite accidentally that something rather thick was stuck inside the lining of his master's coat. He unpicked the lining to see what it was and found a small folded piece of parchment written in his master's hand. Wrapped inside the parchment was a piece of paper written in the same hand, which was a copy of the text on the parchment. Both pieces were immediately handed over to Madame Périer, Pascal's sister, who allowed several friends to examine it. All agreed that these papers, written with such care and in such a clear hand, must represent a sort of memorial that he had kept well protected in order to keep his memory alive to something he wished permanently before his eyes and in his mind, for whenever he had changed his coat during the last eight years he had always gone to the trouble of sewing it in or removing it.<sup>1</sup>

The parchment shows at the top a cross surrounded by rays; underneath it carries the following text:

The Year of Grace 1654.

Monday, 23 November, day of St. Clement, pope and martyr and of others in the Martyrologium, Eve of St. Chrysogonus, martyr and of others. From about half past ten at night to about half past twelve.

Fire.

'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob,'  
not of the philosophers and scholars.  
Certainty. Certainty. Feeling. Joy. Peace.  
God of Jesus Christ.

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées et Opuscules*, p. 141.

Deum meum et Deum vestrum.  
 'Thy God shall be my God.'  
 Forgetting the world and all things except God.  
 He is found only on the ways taught in the Gospel.  
 The greatness of human soul.  
 'Father, thou art just; the world has never  
 acknowledged thee, but I have acknowledged thee.'  
 Joy, joy, joy, tears of joy.  
 I separated myself from Him:  
 Dereliquerunt me fontem aquae vivae.  
 'My God, hast thou forsaken me?'  
 May I not forever be separated from Him.  
 'Eternal life is knowing thee, who art the only  
 true God, and Jesus Christ, whom  
 thou hast sent.'  
 Jesus Christ.  
 Jesus Christ.  
 I separated myself from Him; I fled from Him,  
 I denied and crucified Him.  
 May I never be separated from Him.  
 He is preserved only in the ways taught in  
 the Gospel.  
 Complete inner renunciation.  
 Complete surrender to Jesus Christ and to  
 my spiritual director.  
 Forever in joy for one day of toil  
 on earth.  
 Non obliviscar sermones tuos. Amen.

\* \* \*

This is a historical record in the deepest sense of the word. Testimony is given to an event which divides all that went before from all that came after. No detached feeling, no vague foreboding, no non-committal abstract insight which could have come at any time, but differentiation and decision which create history, namely, the inner Christian history of this man, in that it brings his former life to a climax and sets him on the road to a new beginning. It is the reflection in an individual life of that event which divides the history of mankind into *Ante* and *Post Nativitatem Domini*.

The text is headed by an exact date: '1654, Monday, 23 November'; but as the history of Christian existence is concerned, the date used is the hieratical one: 'The year of Grace 1654'. The day, however, is expressed according to the order of the liturgical Calendar, the Martyrologium: 'Day of St. Clement, pope and martyr and of others in the Martyrologium. Eve of St. Chryso-

gonus, martyr and of others.' Even the hour is specified with the care, not only of an accurate observer, but of one who is fully aware of the precious value of such a spiritual experience and is anxious to preserve its memory: 'From about half past ten at night to half past twelve.'

Next comes a row of words, short sentences, and fragments from Holy Scripture, all jotted down by a hand trembling under the excitement of an immense experience.

The first line consists of a single word in the middle of the line: *Feu*.—'Fire'. Two lines below: 'Certainty. Certainty. Feeling. Joy. Peace.' And again a few lines further down: 'Joy, Joy, Joy, tears of Joy.'

An immense thing has happened. Pascal has stood in fire; nor must we interpret this word in the allegorical sense. When those who are called by God speak of the inner 'light' and inner 'fire', they have in mind no metaphor, but real illumination and real burning, though not of the same nature as in their material sense. What is experienced is the spirit, or rather the Holy Ghost. Thus a new certainty is achieved, new vistas of splendour are opening up, an unambiguous meaning is given to life which places man on a new plane.

Once again we must note that the *Mémorial* contains the words *Grandeur de l'âme humaine*. At the centre of Christian experience, at the centre of the experience of the holy 'fire' where the dignity of God and the reality of sin become evident, Pascal did not forget that humanity has its own dignity.

We know who it was who was writing these words: physicist, mathematician, engineer, psychologist, philosopher of humanity—and all this on the highest plane. What was it that made him write in this incoherent manner?

'Certainty. Certainty. Feeling. Joy. Peace.' These were new experiences to him. He had been longing for them, but had not possessed them. He had given his thoughts to God and had formed conceptions, but he had not reached the true reality. He had applied great effort, but had not been uplifted—but now at last he stood face to face with God's reality.

It is an illuminating and inspiring reality. It produces complete certainty, satisfying peace and a joy independent of all the conditions of existence.

Pascal who insisted on experience as the basis of all knowledge, he who conceived the reality of nature through experiment and

calculation, and grasped the reality of man by observation and analysis—now he stood before the reality of the living God. Henceforth he was able to speak on religious matters with that authenticity which has characterized his work as a physicist and psychologist. Not always; not when at times the devil of polemics seized him, but on all other occasions.

Now we come to the essential point, the strange sentences: 'God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not the God of philosophers and scholars . . . God of Jesus Christ.' What does that mean? To appreciate the deeper meaning of these words one must have been deep in the effort to obtain knowledge, one must have been unhappy at not being able to understand a philosophical concept, and then again overjoyed to find that one has fathomed it. Today it is said everywhere that the God of the Christian life is not the God of philosophy. Since the time when Kierkegaard first made this statement with particular emphasis, and since the collapse of liberal theology and philosophy of religion has suddenly rendered Kierkegaard's philosophy in a curious sense fashionable, many people have reiterated this view, and yet we have no real confidence in it. It is too easy a solution. One has to have the right to make such a statement, and only he has a right to speak thus who has applied honest effort to philosophical thought, and has employed clarity and deep understanding, penetration, consistency, and insight. He must be possessed of that impatient longing for knowledge which tolerates only absolute and eternal knowledge. This attitude, which is now so often ignored, embodies a great tradition of Western thought. In order to appreciate Pascal's insight one must have understood how anyone could believe that mathematics with its strict determinism is the only true knowledge. If all these conditions are given, one will be able to grasp the immense significance of this Christian insight of a philosopher and a mathematician: that God is 'not the God of the philosophers and scholars, but the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob'.

What does this imply? Who then is the God of the philosophers? That which is meant by the conception of the absolute arrived at either by the analysis of outer or inner experience, or else from an examination of the world of logic or of values, or indeed in any other way. God is then 'the first cause', 'the highest being', 'the idea of the absolute', 'the eternal law', etc. The distinguishing mark of this interpretation of God is that it tries to



understand Him in complete detachment, free from all restrictions and all that is finite, without contact with the world or humanity.

Wherein then lay Pascal's shattering discovery? What was the cause of his almost speechless joy? A man of Pascal's genius appreciated what the struggle for the pure conception of the idea of God meant. He was not subject to the neurosis of modern times which considers the application of concepts a threat to religion. He was no *Erlebnisgläubiger* in the modern sense of the word. But now his own experience had shown him that God was 'the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and not of the philosophers and scholars'—that He is 'the God of Jesus Christ'. This means first and foremost that God is person.

Let us be cautious, however, for even this definition could be taken purely philosophically. This, however, is not Pascal's intention. He did not mean that God was 'the absolute person', or 'pure personality', but that he was 'this person' who is as He is and not otherwise. Here we feel the uniqueness of the Christian experience.

When a man from the absolute nature of his thinking announces 'God is this Person', this means something extraordinary. All that he has formerly concealed under the cloak of common principles, absolute values and cosmological or ontological ideas, he now dares to introduce into the realm of those concepts which are derived from differentiations between human persons, from the contrast between 'I' and 'You', in other words: from history. Before his great experience he would have rejected such a method. 'Philosophers' tend to censure religious thinking on the very ground that it is 'anthropomorphic'; this is why they put aside that manner of thinking and prefer to use pure absolute concepts instead. What has happened to make Pascal experience the destruction of the purely philosophical idea of God with such deep joy? How did it come about that now, after reaching the realm of 'anthropomorphic' concepts, he is for the first time conscious that he is facing the uniqueness of reality? There is only one answer to these questions. Pascal himself would say that he had met the living God, and that if one were to speak the truth one would be obliged to say: 'He is present, He acts, He speaks.' In other words, God had appeared to him in a personal form and a meeting had taken place which could only be described in terms to be found on every page of the Holy Scripture.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I hope to elucidate this whole complex of problems in my work on the theology of the New Testament which I have been preparing for a long time.



God is He. 'I am who am,' He uttered about Himself in the most important hour.<sup>1</sup> He is the one who is himself in a sovereign manner, and whose living being cannot be derived from anything in the world, not even from a concept of the absolute. Each concept can only describe a part of Him, but never Himself. He transcends all attempts to define His nature, and approaches reality only when He Himself offers Himself. He can only be seen when He crosses one's path. He can only be spoken of, when He Himself is speaking, in the word which He Himself chooses.

This closer union with God becomes possible only through Revelation: through a messenger, through the spoken word, or through an event arranged by divine Providence. He is the 'God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob', the God of those men, who, at that time and in that country, stood as the essential figures in a historical drama. But the mind absorbed in philosophy is repelled by the apparently arbitrary dependence of the absolute on historical coincidence.

God is 'the God of Jesus Christ'. When Philip asked: 'Lord, let us see the Father,' Jesus answered: 'Here am I, who have been all this while in your company; hast thou not learnt to recognize me yet? Whoever has seen me, has seen the Father.'<sup>2</sup> Again the philosopher must be disappointed, for he wishes to understand God from the proof he sees in nature, from the necessities of logic, from the categorical structure of consciousness, from the postulates of action, or from the specific values of religious experience. Instead he is asked to receive God in the person of a real historical figure who lived at a certain time in a particular country.

The Christian God is the God of Jesus Christ, the God of whom Jesus is speaking when He says: 'My Father.' It is impossible to dissociate the Christian idea of God from the historical Christ. Christian doctrine remains Christian only in so far as it emanates from Christ and is alive in Him and is understood in relation to His existence and activity on earth. There is no such thing as an 'Essence of Christianity' divorced from Him and expressible in a separate system of ideas. The essence of Christianity is Christ.

And again the way to an understanding of Pascal's God is not general religious experience, not spiritual effort alone, moral endeavour or clear interpretation—though naturally all this remains important—but that which has been shown to us in the

<sup>1</sup> Exodus iii, 14.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv, 9.

Gospel. 'None knows the Father truly except the Son, and those to whom it is the Son's good pleasure to reveal him.'<sup>1</sup> 'I am the way; I am truth and life; nobody can come to the Father, except through me.'<sup>2</sup> It is the path of faith. Faith is that act of personal adherence, of self-surrender through which Jesus Christ becomes the beginning which leads to a new existence in the fullest sense of the word. The believer enters the sphere of Jesus. In 'rebirth' and 'succession' he is privileged to share in Christ's view and accepts as his own the standards of Christ. As far as purely natural feelings are concerned, this is a step into the unknown. Yet it is here that the gate to the Kingdom of God is opened to the believer.

There exists a small piece of writing under the title *Sur la conversion du pécheur*, probably from the year 1655, which expresses with great emphasis the experiencing of that newly won order of existence in the spirit of fragment 793:

The first thing with which God endows a soul which He honours by His presence, is an extraordinary power of intellect and breadth of vision whereby the soul regards the world and itself in an entirely new light. This new light causes fear and unrest which clashes with the calm it had found in things hitherto enjoyable. It can no longer enjoy with the same peace of mind the things in which it previously took delight. A scruple continuously interferes with this enjoyment. But it meets with more bitter disappointments in pious practices than in the vanities of the world. On the one hand the presence of visible things make a greater impression on it than the hope for those that are invisible; on the other hand, it is more impressed by the essential nature of the invisible than by the transitory character of those that are visible. Thus the presence of the one and the essential nature of the other fight to win its sympathy, and the transitoriness of the one and the absence of the other are vying with one another for its antipathy, so that disorder and confusion result.

That which reveals itself as beginning in the experience of the *Mémorial*, is here already developing. The old and the new forms of consciousness and evaluation encroach on each other's ground and find themselves in conflict.

This is equally true of the life of knowledge and thought. A new reality, a new plane of thought, and a new vision are reached; strenuous but rewarding work begins. The general conceptions of God, the general ideas of His being which promised to be so 'pure' and, indeed, in a certain sense were, all go to make this apparent humanizing of His nature. The two worlds of experience and

<sup>1</sup> Matt. xi, 27.

<sup>2</sup> John xiv, 6.

thought, summed up in the words 'God is the absolute' and 'God is He who speaks through the person of Jesus Christ', come into conflict. Their relationship is one of tension, often even of contradiction, and this contradiction is not only apparent in thought, but in the whole way in which a man looks at himself and the world. Nevertheless these contrasts are aspects of the same reality: the living God. Religious thinking is now trying to grasp the modes of thought compatible with the living God, namely those of the Scripture and of the Saints. Reason is arming itself against this danger, feels itself uprooted and, at the same time, fears new problems and the forms they may assume.

'The conception of God of the philosophers', as far as it is based on honest work, retains its value, and that value is great in spite of those who at all times have poured scorn on philosophy and are doing so in our time. For, the connexions between various things, the presuppositions of thought, and the power of the intellect, as a result of which those concepts have been developed, have no evil origin, but spring from the same God who has spoken through Christ. But the Creation is dependent on Grace and can only be understood in this relation. The modern antipathy towards philosophy in religious thinking attacks the 'paganism' of ancient philosophy, producing nevertheless a paganism of its own. Thus a type of thinking originates at once lively, tense, rich in possibilities, yet also strained in a way which is not characteristic of pure philosophical thinking. At this point one begins to understand Pascal's struggle in the *Pensées*.

Moreover, the whole world is affected by this tension, for the world is no longer the 'finality' which is understood with reference to an 'absolute', as is the case in pure philosophy, but the work of the living God, the matter of His Providence, the space into which He enters. It is the field of action and experience where God comes half-way to meet man.

How then is the world to be understood if it is all that—and yet neither the exactitude of its science nor the factual character of its historiography, nor indeed the categories of philosophy in which it must be clearly conceived are to be destroyed? How can the Christian idea of Providence which is itself the living charity of God in history, be conceived in genuine Christian terms, and this in such a manner that this charity does not degenerate into a rationalistic order of the world, nor into a welfare organization of mankind, but so as to preserve that essential uniqueness of Christ's

message? And how is it possible to combine this with the purity and accuracy by means of which science and historiography have taught us to conceive reality? How are we to grasp God's Providence—not in an imaginary world, but in the world of reality? Here is the task which lies before us.

When Pascal underwent the experience which is recorded in the *Mémorial*, he did not cease to be mathematician, physicist, engineer, psychologist, and philosopher. Both before and after his great experience he was aware of the reality on which these branches of knowledge are based and he was likewise determined to do them justice. For him, however, a new reality had arisen: the living God. This new reality he could not ignore, nor could he isolate it in a special sphere after the idealistic method of those who believe in a twofold truth. The new reality compelled him to construct the whole of existence anew. If a physicist saw in the human body only the statics and dynamics of certain structures of forces, yet one day suddenly realized what life itself was—he could not then keep his knowledge in two compartments, one for man's physical structure, and the other for his vitality. He would feel himself bound to pose the problem of the 'physics of life'. He would be similarly affected if he discovered the nature of the spiritual and personal element in man. Translated into a yet higher sphere, for the event in question comes from above: the world remains the world for Pascal, and philosophy remains philosophy, yet everything is called into a new context, and thought is faced with a new challenge through the knowledge that God whom the philosophy only understands as the 'absolute', is in reality the living God who enters upon history in the person of Jesus Christ, and that man's relation to God which the philosophers call 'relationship to the absolute', is in reality the life of one who is called upon by God and follows that call.

The momentous fragments which Pascal subsequently created and left to us—his *Pensées*—testify to his struggle to achieve this aim.

# BALZAC

## A Study of Religious Conviction

By BÉLA MENCZER

ARE there any birthdays in the other world? Does a soul celebrate the centenary of its entry into Purgatory, and does it receive friendly greetings on such occasions and good wishes for a speedy despatch to a higher stage? Does it care about reports from earth, summing up the substance of its terrestrial actions, and even if such reports are done with some amount of competence, do they carry any weight with the Seraphim and Cherubim in charge of further recommendations, and with the Keeper of the Door, or does this latter wait for a personal hint from his own successor on earth, or the authorities appointed by him, before he opens the door?

We know essentially nothing on all these questions. Popular beliefs, near enough to truth as they usually are, seem to circulate, however, among men on this subject. Otherwise there seems to be no explanation of why anniversaries should awake slumbering interests, and why such accidental facts that Honoré de Balzac had his hundred and fiftieth birthday in 1949 and that 1950 will see the centenary of his death,<sup>1</sup> should provoke a whole new literature on him in France and outside France.

Balzac belongs to the last century, but to far more than the last century. As long as human nature exists, Balzac will be there, and only Shakespeare and Cervantes among the modern inventors of human character will rival this 'rival of the register office', as he liked to describe himself, whose fictitious human society has survived the real human beings who were registered as the human society of his century.

Much has been written on Balzac in 1949, and more is to be expected in 1950. Will anyone ever write in his honour the only book this author of some ninety volumes, this writer of an almost unbelievable fecundity and almost unlimited capacity of invention, just suggested in a Preface and in some fragments which were

<sup>1</sup> Balzac died on 17 August, 1850.



published after his death—a book summing up the whole morality of the *Comédie Humaine*, that social theology, or theological sociology, which he often contemplated, ever since he had first come under the spell of Bonald in his youth; Bonald, the foremost defender of the Church and of Christian Monarchy in the era of the Revolution, who, in his *Essai analytique sur les lois naturelles*, written on the eve of the nineteenth century and the morrow of Bonaparte's rise to the Consulate, hoped for a new age in which the laws of human society would be as fully explored and as well known as the laws of nature were in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Without Bonald, whom Balzac liked to quote, we should understand very little of Balzac, for his whole *œuvre* was an interminable comment on Bonald's central idea of a social science which revealed and proved the existence of God in His unity and His Trinity. Without his fundamental, unwavering and never questioned Catholic convictions, which he held in the most dogmatic sense of the Church, Balzac cannot be understood, so that biographical or aesthetic studies which attempt to interpret him in a different light leave him as the sculptor Rodin left him, standing on the *Carrefour des Arts*, without eyes, without hands and without legs, an incomplete image of an artist who was a clear-sighted observer, a hard worker, and a man who stood with both legs solidly planted on the ground of human and social realities.

Balzac still gave this word its true meaning. Later-day 'realism', which began with Flaubert the degeneracy and decadence of the whole art of the novel, and which continues today in the inflation of conventionalized 'reality', making 'grim realism' more banal than any sentimentalism ever was in previous generations, has nothing to do with Balzac. He was a writer of novels, yet he was very far removed from the pseudo-philosophies of later 'novelism', if we may be allowed to coin this word to describe the reasoning and unimaginative art which has become an industry today.

Balzac never lost sight of the great central problem of man. Minute detail, meticulous description and the minute registering of psychical reactions he would never have considered to be an art. We shall never enter the Kingdom of Heaven unless we become like little children; we shall never enter the romantic realm unless we become like adolescents. To be a poet means to imagine men and places, characters and situations, which resemble in some way



reminiscences of a past which is sometimes near and sometimes distant, but in a way which always keeps the imaginary world subject to the law, in that perfect simplicity with which God made it for men.

Balzac's code was as simple as the Decalogue. This inventor of vast passions, ambitions, intrigues and jealousies, on a scale unknown to any previous master of the imagination, was never tempted by the idea of any subjective law, or complex subjective truth. His imaginary society was a protest against all individualist fantasies. Before him, writers invented or reproduced stories about a man or a woman, and told of the curious destiny, or of a queer adventure, of a man or a woman. Balzac transformed this art and created the social novel. Not that he was concerned with schemes for the improvement of human society. Not that he was indignant at social injustice or inequality. He certainly never confused the social problem with the economic one, as later generations did, and he never understood by the social problem the primacy of material security. Nor did his tremendous imagination ever mislead him into creating an ideal world of his own, in which beauty inevitably coincides with virtue and talent, or an ideal world in which punishment follows quickly upon sin and virtue finds its reward. He knew well enough that beautiful women are not always angels, and that men of superior qualities are not always handsome, although he thought there was no more legitimate ambition than the male desire of a superior intellect for union with perfect feminine charm. The primacy of the social problem meant the same thing to Balzac as it did to Bonald; Balzac invented families and not individuals, and by 'society' he meant the government of mankind by ties of a hierarchical order, by the Fatherhood of God, by the Revelation made by the Son, by the knowledge given by the Holy Ghost, by the Church and by powers whose consecration was undoubted. As he says in the Preface to the *Comédie Humaine*:

*Le christianisme a créé les peuples modernes, il les conservera. De là sans doute la nécessité du principe monarchique. Le catholicisme et la royauté sont deux principes jumeaux. . . . J'écris à la lueur de deux vérités éternelles, la religion et la monarchie, que les événements contemporains réclament et vers lesquelles tout écrivain de bon sens doit essayer de ramener son pays.*

A rare and almost unique combination of systematic intellect and unlimited powers of imagination, Balzac saw God mainly under the aspect of these faculties.

God created the world, for He imagined it and He governs it by His intellect and will. At first hearing this is a somewhat cold, dry and incomplete theology, in which Love plays no central part as the expression of Divinity, and as the principal motive underlying Creation. Nevertheless, it is a theology which Balzac intended and believed to be perfectly orthodox, and which is perfectly correct, if somewhat incomplete; he even sensed what was the most necessary addition to it, when he desired to leave for a moment the somewhat too rational spiritual climate of his native country for that spiritual climate from which so many great imaginative characters come:

*La piété espagnole ne sépare pas la foi de l'amour et ne comprend pas le sentiment sans souffrances.*

The least that can be said of Balzac is that a theological and eschatological preoccupation never left him for a moment. His *Pensées et Maximes*, posthumously edited by Barbey d'Aurevilly, and his *Catéchisme social*,<sup>1</sup> which Bonald's Catholic and legitimist review *Le Rénovateur* did not print when he wrote it in 1833, and which was only discovered many years later among the unpublished manuscripts of the great novelist, furnish ample proof of this assertion.

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A scientific rule as old as Aristotle urges us to define things which are unknown by analogy with things which are best known. This rule holds good for the aesthetics of literary history, as well as for any other discipline. Nevertheless it is, in this domain, a source of manifold embarrassment for a writer of our day. When we say that Balzac was Catholic and monarchist, two adjectives he applied unceasingly to himself, and two doctrines from which no biographer will be able to discover any deviation in his career, we risk giving to some contemporaries who are not so accustomed to delve below the most obvious superficialities, the impression that he was an ideological propagandist, more concerned to impress a political allegiance on the reader than any properly artistic and literary aim—that literary aim which is, according to classic definition, the reflection of reality through the vision of a temperament.

<sup>1</sup>'Le catéchisme social de Balzac.' Textes établis et commentés par Bernard Guyon. 'La Renaissance du livre.' Paris, 1949.

If we say that Balzac was a writer whose preoccupation was with social concerns, the present-day reader, accustomed to a loose meaning of words, may think of schemes of salaries, workmen's insurance or old-age pensions, propagated by artistic means if he belongs to the milder Western climate of compulsory welfare and universal philanthropic bureaucratization; he may think of a propagandist art which typifies in an easy and cheap way the 'class-struggle', if he is inclined towards the more rough and rude intellectual climate of Moscow and Berlin—that climate which belonged to Berlin before it invaded Moscow.

Finally, even when we describe Balzac as an artist preoccupied primarily with religious and theological concerns, we are frightened by a type of present-day reader who is doubtless more subtle, intelligent and refined than the previous ones, and to whom an artist who deals with religious and theological concerns is necessarily a solitary and a mystic, an over-sensitive soul addicted to torturing self-analysis, and an over-sensitive temperament thirsting to implicate the whole world in his own personal need of confession.

Perhaps we had better say at once, before any of these misunderstandings occur, that when we apply these adjectives to Balzac we mean almost the exact opposite of what the types of reader visualized above mean. That he was a Catholic and a monarchist he implied in the whole of his artistic creation; he even said it explicitly when he endeavoured to sum up the lesson of his imaginary society, the laws of which he found eventually to coincide with those which faith and reason recognize as the fundamental law of the real world and real society. He was a social artist in the sense that he wrote for all, that he described the universal and not the individual significance of moral dilemmas, and that he concentrated all his attention on a 'decapitated' society. In the words of his own *Pensées et Maximes*:

*En coupant la tête à Louis XVI, la Révolution a coupé la tête à tous les pères de famille.*

*Il n'y a plus de familles aujourd'hui, il n'y a que des individus. En voulant devenir une nation, les Français ont renoncé à être un empire. En proclamant l'égalité des droits à la succession paternelle, ils ont tué l'esprit de famille et ils ont créé le fisc! Mais ils ont préparé la faiblesse des supériorités et la force aveugle de la masse, l'extinction des arts, le règne de l'intérêt personnel. . . . En perdant la solidarité des familles, la société a perdu cette force fondamentale que Montesquieu appelait l'honneur. . . . Ne demandez jamais rien de grand aux intérêts, parce que les intérêts peuvent changer; mais*

*attendez tout des sentiments, de la foi religieuse, de la foi monarchique, de la foi patriotique. . . . Le suicide doit être le dernier mot des sociétés incrédules.*

The great lesson Balzac teaches us is man's misery when he is deprived of God; his great study was society deprived of a head, the road which leads to suicide as the inevitable consequence of egotism and irreligion. None of Balzac's heroes lacks mystery. The only real human greatness he can conceive is the secret thought, the hidden inner life, which has an unrevealed plan. Man created in the image of God resembles God. He has a secret plan. This unrevealed, secret plan makes Napoleon great in his battles, Talleyrand or Metternich great in the government of men. The supreme vocation is essentially mystical, it is the priesthood:

*Le prêtre qui remplit sa mission est connu par le premier regard qu'il vous jette ou qu'on lui jette.*

For the government of men and of society, even the fallen mystical intelligence, incapable of moral virtue, is still superior to all non-mystical and non-metaphysical reason—Talleyrand, Fouché and Siéyès, fallen, sinful and apostate priests, are the statesmen of the era of the Revolution (*Une ténébreuse affaire*) and the only statesmen of this era. According to Balzac's *Essai sur M. Beyle*, which appeared as a preface to a posthumous edition of Stendhal's *La Chartreuse de Parme*, in 1844, and was, so to say, the discovery of a much neglected master by a greater pupil, and at the same time the most complete theory of the novel Balzac ever wrote before the preface to his own *Comédie Humaine*, the art of the novel lies in an inquiry into the workings of the guiding intelligence, that divine reason which governs the world and human reason which governs society. Machiavelli would, according to Balzac, have written novels like the *Chartreuse de Parme*, had he lived in the nineteenth century.

There are many affinities between Machiavelli and Balzac. The fundamental thesis of the Florentine, that *onorevole tristizia* is the next best quality to pure virtue, receives its amplest commentary in *Pensées et Maximes*, as well as in almost the whole of Balzac's creation:

*Ceux qui ont marché sous la bannière de l'instinct sont beaucoup plus propres à recevoir la lumière que ceux dont l'esprit et le cœur se sont usés dans les subtilités de ce monde.*

The ethical problem raised by Machiavelli for the never-ending discussion of posterity, the problem of evil passion in the service of noble causes, of humanity disguised as vice, is to be found on practically every page of Balzac. It is to be found in Vautrin, perhaps the greatest creation of his imagination, the vicious criminal and loyal friend, who has an unselfish devotion to what he recognizes as superiority. It is to be found in the political philosophy of *Un médecin de campagne*, above all in *Une ténébreuse affaire*. Balzac the moralist studies man and society in all their aspects, in town and province, in the political world and in private life. He describes them in order to establish his final conclusion. The novel is for him a means to an end: action takes place only in order to discover the thought which underlies it, and of which the action is the expression. And if this action has a central importance in his philosophy, the reason lies in his fundamental and unwavering orthodox Catholicism, summed up in Thomas à Kempis, as he says in *Pensées et Maximes*:

*Impossible de ne pas être saisi par l'Imitation, qui est au dogme ce que l'action est à la pensée. Le catholicisme y vibre, s'y meut, s'y agite, s'y prend corps à corps avec la vie humaine. C'est un ami sûr que ce livre. . . . Quand les choses de la vie ordinaire ne nous ont pas pu donner le bonheur, il faut le chercher dans la vie supérieure et la vie de nouveau monde qu'est l'Imitation de Jésus Christ.*

There is no point in questioning professions of faith of this kind, which are numerous enough in Balzac, by alleging details or indiscretions in the story of his life which seldom shows Balzac engaged in his parish devotions, but more often in business speculations or love affairs, which were possibly not heard without some alarm in the secret of the confessional, from which biographers are fortunately excluded. Every life which is worth living, and is worthy of record, is superior to the mere opinions and reasonings of a lifetime. Every true spiritual summing-up of a life is worth more than a mere biographical and documentary record, which only has any importance at all in so far as it is seen in the light of the supreme spiritual affirmation of that life. Blessed are those who arrive at such an affirmation and summing-up as Balzac did in *Pensées et Maximes* and in his *Catéchisme social*.

A *Pensées et Maximes* and the *Catéchisme social* would be enough to spare us any further 'indiscreet' biographies on Balzac, which are, besides the so-called psychological and realistic novel, the



other curse of the present age. The so-called psychological biography was invented in order to unmask a man of genius by 'showing him in his humanity', and the second literary genre, the so-called realistic novel, was invented in order to discredit all higher values and motives by showing humanity in a state of hopeless and unredeemed pettiness.

Balzac, who is sometimes invoked as the ancestor of this pseudo-realistic art—for, with the exception of Stendhal, he was the first author in whose stories the conventional idealization and beauty of the hero was absent—should, a hundred years after his death, be given the place which is his due, next to Shakespeare and Cervantes, rather than at the beginning of a series of minor imitators.

It is true that he indulged in many indiscreet details about great men, about Napoleon and Talleyrand, but it was never in order to diminish or to discredit greatness, never for the sake of mere biography, but always for the sake of history. It is in the interest of humour that he is full of natural details in *Contes drôlatiques*, and of bitter satire in *Le père Goriot*; this naturalness is never an end in itself, and never degenerates into 'naturalism', for he was always concerned with the supernatural, especially when dealing with the most natural of human problems, the problem of sex, which he saw in the light of his faith:

*Dans le protestantisme, il n'y a plus rien de possible pour la femme après sa faute, tandis que dans l'Eglise catholique l'espoir du pardon la rend sublime. . . . La religion est la consolatrice des virginités.*

Balzac approached History through its heroes and penetrated society by means of individual lives, his fundamental thesis in both cases being that thought, the secret plan and the hidden inspiration, the mystical essence, is superior to the individual who carries it in his head and in his heart, and that a mystical plan of a superior understanding governs history and society. As he says in *Un médecin de campagne*:

*Quand le pouvoir vient de Dieu, il est fixe. Quand il vient du peuple, il est vacillant. Il est incontestable, ou contesté. Telle est la loi de l'histoire.*

\* \* \*

Romanticism and History are closely connected with each other; History inspired the movement which was first called Romantic by its opponents, then by its supporters, who accepted



this nickname as aptly describing the new picturesque style inaugurated by Chateaubriand and Sir Walter Scott.

Nevertheless, we should not forget that Romanticism was originally nothing more than a nickname, which was accepted only because it would have been difficult to find another word characteristic and descriptive enough for this tendency. Metternich, the ideal statesman according to Balzac, boasted of his incapacity to read novels, describing himself as a historical temperament naturally hostile to the novel, which he only knew under the name 'romance', a more or less ironical term, coined in order to convey the fact that it is written in corrupt Latin, a story in a Romance language which is unworthy of the noble elegance and dignity of serious prose.

Balzac has all the elements required to be classified as a Romantic. He is a writer of adventure stories, he writes in a modern Romance language, he indulges to an extent unknown before him in costumes and physical details, historical atmosphere and even in panorama and landscape. Antitheses, the surprising contrast, the approach of extremes in a character, are almost as much elements in his creation as they were in Victor Hugo himself, and he hardly cared more than Hugo did for psychological exactitude, which was the reaction of later schools, who called themselves realist, or naturalist, in opposition to the Romantic revolution of the early nineteenth century.

Yet he escapes every classification, as genius always does. What raises Balzac above the Romantics, using this term in the much larger context of a whole literary era, rather than in the narrow sense of a 'school', is that his history is real, and not decorative history. Whether he goes back to Henry IV, the *Ligue* and Cardinal de Bourbon, or to the, for him, almost contemporary scenes of *Les Chouans*, of the Revolution, Napoleon and *Un épisode sous la Terreur*, or whether he stays in his own time to witness *Le Départ* of Charles X for England after the July Revolution, every word and every detail is the writing of History. Certainly it is not History in any bare or factual sense. He makes ample use of the poet's divine right of invention, or emphasis, by imaginative additions to facts known from oral or written tradition. Yet, in a truer and more relevant sense than this, Balzac is a historian. The first requirement of the true historian (not of professors of history, who are many and rightly so, but of historians, who are few, like true poets or philosophers) Balzac possesses: he believes in the value,

and the primary value, of tradition for the people, whose foremost need is moral truth and strength. He expresses this in *Pensées et Maximes* almost better than could his master Bonald, whose hand we so often recognize in Balzac:

*La croyance et l'habitude valent mieux pour le peuple que l'étude et le raisonnement. . . . La religion est le cœur d'un peuple; elle exprime ses sentiments et les agrandit en leur donnant une fin. . . . Sans un Dieu visiblement honoré, la religion n'existe pas et les lois humaines n'ont aucune vigueur.*

Balzac is a historian by passion. For a passion for truth and justice is the second requirement of the historian, after a respect for tradition. The historian could only remain impartial if he believed—what he is in honour and in duty bound to refuse to believe—that the past does not matter much, that the truth always lies between two aberrations, and that we should always prefer those ideas which express a compromise, a middle way between 'extremes', rather than ideas which are true.

Classification is always a thankless task; hardly do we find it possible to suggest one, before manifold objections present themselves to our mind, quite apart from the essential one already mentioned, that genius escapes classification. No sooner do we speak of Balzac as the master of the historical novel than we fear to be misunderstood. The title, for all we know, belongs rather to Sir Walter Scott, and Balzac especially, that champion of every legitimism, would never wish to claim anybody else's throne and title. To be more precise, Balzac is not the master of the historical novel, he is the historian among the novelists. No major figure in his fiction lacks his family tree. Other novelists create a story about young heroes and heroines; Balzac's men and women have a youth, a maturity and an old age, and pass through the different phases of their lives as mankind passes through the centuries—different phases in the life of the nations. Human comedy, like the Divine Comedy, moves towards a climax, towards a Judgement, which is the outcome of creation and the essence of history. At no moment did Balzac forget the relation of creation to judgement.

Victor Hugo—whom Balzac could not forgive for his democratic sympathies of 1848, which he thought were unworthy of a Peer of France, the most splendid title after that of King of France<sup>1</sup>—would have preferred the *Comédie Humaine* to be called

<sup>1</sup> See Victor Hugo's *Choses Vues* for an account of the poet's interview with Balzac during his last illness.

History, and not Comedy.<sup>1</sup> When we consider all the differences in politics which divided the greatest French lyric poet of the nineteenth century from the greatest writer of the French epic in prose, this is perhaps the most understanding remark which has ever been made on Balzac; it is the more surprising, since the critical faculty is usually missing in poets, and a just and subtle critical remark from Victor Hugo, who was so infinitely stronger in his emotions than in his judgements, is the last thing that one would expect. Balzac is the historian of his time; the figures of his imagination are more historical, more characteristic of a period, than most of the personalities who really lived in it, including those who left entertaining memoirs on the years they lived through.

Only a degraded philosophy could confuse material and physical conformity to fact with reality. True philosophy has always known that the nature of reality is spiritual, that art is superior to material fact, as spirit is superior to matter, superior because it is formed, created and ordered. Because it is ordered, art surpasses nature, for order has primacy over chaos. The religious experience of Balzac was one of poetic reality. Even to survey this poetic reality, called into being by his genius, is a difficult task for others. Anecdote has it that he would announce the death of some of his characters to a friend with tears in his eyes, and that he would make a pleased or a malicious remark about their marriages, or about other events in their lives. These stories, if untrue, are at any rate very plausible. Balzac's religious experience was the suffering of the Creator for the fate of His creatures, that suffering which the creative, ordering mind feels over the disorder caused by sin, the disorder and the fall which began with the action of the woman, and which counts among its various phases a time of revolutions, just such a one as Balzac's time was—a time of which the prophet Nehemias spoke, when he predicted for the Jews (what seemed to him to be the supreme punishment of a people, but was, and still is, praised by the modern Democrat as the supreme reward) a wandering in the desert without Kings, without priests and without sacrificers.

Balzac's *œuvre* is the chronicle of this wandering through the desert of egotism, of lost forms, lost symbols and a lost faith.

<sup>1</sup> See Victor Hugo's funeral oration at the grave of Balzac in *Actes et Paroles*, Vol. I. *Avant l'exil*.

# EMPIRICISM & POLITICS

By J. M. CAMERON

*Bad doctrines are always and everywhere more fatal than bad actions.*

—R. H. TAWNEY

POLITICAL philosophy is not a central interest among English philosophers today. It is curious that this should be so, for great changes in culture and civilization tend to be reflected in the preoccupations of philosophers. The development of the natural sciences has provoked great activity in epistemology and logical theory. Increase in our knowledge of the past has renewed interest in all those who from St. Augustine to Vico have speculated upon history, and stimulated the greater part of the work of the late R. G. Collingwood, of all modern English philosophers perhaps the one most nearly touched with genius. Man is always aware of the predicaments of personal life, most of all in a fluid society within which all social hierarchies are dissolving or dissolved; and we look for and find a continued interest in ethics, whether this be the close analysis of such a philosopher as Sir David Ross or the less formal discussion by the Existentialists of 'witness', 'concern', 'decision' and so on. And yet it is above all in the life of politics that our time manifests its character. The totalitarian State is as much a novelty in human history as the release of atomic energy, and makes as great demands upon human courage and intelligence, and upon the supernatural resources of the Christian. Outside the totalitarian States, even in so 'liberal' a society as that of the United States, the State claims rights of jurisdiction and positive action in fields which have commonly been the concern of individual persons, of the family, of other social groups within the State, and of religious bodies.

If English philosophers, with some important exceptions (Lord Lindsay and, among younger philosophers, Mr. T. D. Weldon may be mentioned), have little to say on questions of political theory, there may be more than one reason for their silence. In the universities there has been a strong and natural reaction away from the political Idealism of Green, Bradley, and Bosanquet.

Mr. Michael Oakshott is the only notable example of such Idealism, and his thought is in some respects profoundly different from that of the nineteenth-century Idealists. Again, many philosophers, no doubt, think—as, if I understand him rightly, does Mr. E. F. Carritt—that political theory—apart, that is, from political science—is simply the application of the principles of ethics to a particular subject-matter; and they hesitate a little to extend their casuistry from the time-honoured instances of the borrowing of books and the keeping of appointments to the perhaps graver instances of atomic bombing and political obligation in a totalitarian State. Further, there is a strong tendency for the teaching of political theory to dissolve into the teaching of the history of political doctrines; and when the political doctrines of our own day come to be considered the teacher is often a shrewd critic, but rarely thinks any doctrine rationally defensible. Most of all, however, silence on the philosophy of politics is a consequence of the fashionable nominalism and empiricism. Just as ethical statements are thought to be statements of feeling or commands grounded upon feelings, so statements about rights or law or political obligation lack the content attributed to them by an earlier generation and, especially, lack their former ‘numinous’ quality, a quality they possessed in virtue of their connexion with the affirmations of metaphysics.

At a recent Joint Session of the Mind Association and the Aristotelian Society there was presented an illuminating symposium on ‘Science and Politics’. Greatly as the three contributing philosophers differed among themselves over the issues under discussion, there were certain matters upon which there was common agreement. It was agreed that the question: Whence is the authority of the State derived? is a meaningless question, at least in the sense that no rationally justifiable answer can be offered. Mr. Rush Rhees quoted Proudhon in support of this view: *La philosophie est aussi incapable de démontrer le Gouvernement que de prouver Dieu. L’Autorité, comme la Divinité, n’est point matière de savoir ; c’est, je le répète, matière de foi.*<sup>1</sup> (This quotation brings out the interesting point that although scepticism in this matter may today be connected with empiricism, historically it has also depended upon Kant’s rejection of metaphysics as a science.) Mr. T. D. Weldon argued<sup>2</sup> that to ask whence an institution derives its authority is

<sup>1</sup> *Aristotelian Society*, Supplementary Volume XXIII, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 145, 146.



a sensible question only in regard to subordinate institutions—a subordinate court, for example, derives its authority from a supreme court, the L.C.C. or the Coal Board derives its authority from the King in Parliament—but that when we are considering an institution legally supreme, or when we are considering anything else, such as a man's own conscience, claiming supreme authority, the question has no meaning, for such a question is really a disguised form of the question: Whence is all authority derived? Mr. Weldon was confident that no answer could be returned to this question and that we ought instead to ask a question to which a factual answer could be given, the question: Whose decision is authoritative? (Again, we may note that the rejection of the possibility of a metaphysical grounding of authority is implied and that it is immaterial whether the rejection is on Kantian or on empiricist grounds.)

Another question upon which there seemed to be common agreement was that it was not possible to speak of a law prior to positive law. Mr. Nowell Smith wrote plainly on this point: 'There is no Super-Law, human or divine, that justifies positive law; and, if there were, it would be a super-tyranny, explaining much but justifying nothing.'<sup>1</sup>

Mr. T. D. Weldon's recent book<sup>2</sup> on the philosophy of politics provides an interesting example of the modern approach to political theory. It may not be a representative book in the sense that other philosophers would be willing to subscribe to its conclusions or approve the arguments upon which they are founded; but it is, I believe, representative in its temper and in the general drift of its conclusions. The entire argument is too long and too involved to be summarized conveniently, but there are some particular arguments and conclusions plain enough and representative enough to be worth discussing at some length here.

Theories advanced by political philosophers divide into two kinds. There are those which may be described as rationalistic. These argue that there are in politics—in the end this means in ethics—universally valid premisses from which valid conclusions applicable to particular cases may be deduced. The alternative view is to understand a political theory as an hypothesis designed

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 160. Although Mr. Nowell Smith seems here to offer an extreme example of the consequences of empiricism, his contribution to the symposium is the most balanced of the three. Especially interesting is his echoing (p. 163) of St. Thomas (or Hooker) on the nature of law.

<sup>2</sup> T. D. Weldon, *States and Morals*, 1946.



to explain political arrangements and ethico-political sentiments in a particular kind of State. Many philosophers classified by Mr. Weldon as rationalistic—Aristotle, for example—have on the whole supposed themselves to be expounding the first kind of political theory, but have in fact been expounding the second kind. Indeed, it appears to be doubtful (at least, I think this is the sense of Mr. Weldon's argument) whether or not a political theory in the first sense is really possible, for even those theories—Hegel's, for example—which appear to be most rigorously rationalistic, in that they are derived from metaphysical and ethical premisses that purport to transcend experience, are meaningful only in so far as they function as theories of the second kind. Hegelian political philosophy is meaningful in so far as it is a generalization about German political behaviour and sentiment.

Political theories, then, may most profitably be considered as hypotheses designed to explain actual political societies. If we survey contemporary States we find that the theories designed to explain them are of two kinds: organic and mechanical. (The mechanical theories subdivide into what Mr. Weldon calls 'force' theories and 'consent' theories; but this division need not concern us here.) Organic theories hold that the State is the kind of whole of which it is sensible to say that the whole is prior to the parts. Logically this implies that the good of the whole State is separable from the good of its parts and that the parts ought always to be subordinated to the whole, as in Plato's well-known argument, when in *The Republic* it was objected that under the régime of military monasticism the Guardians would not be very happy, that what matters is not the happiness of individuals or groups, but the happiness of the whole *polis*. A further common and perhaps inevitable consequence of any organic theory is the notion of a State personality with a will which is other and higher than the wills of the individual citizens. Mechanical theories think of the State as 'the device of government', to quote the title of Professor Laird's book on the subject. The State is an artificially contrived institution. Of course, Mr. Weldon does not formulate any kind of contractual theory according to which a State is created at a specific period of time, though he points out that something like this is true of some States—the Soviet Union, for example, or the United States. At bottom the State is a creation of human art, an artefact; and as the material upon which the art is exercised is plastic, and as there is no one purpose which the art

must serve, States are various in their constitutions and in the moral values pervading them.

Now, both organic and mechanical theories are defensible in two ways. They can be, though commonly they are not, stated in a coherent way; given the premisses, the conclusions follow. More importantly, the two kinds of theory do describe with fair accuracy the practice of existing States and the sentiments which the practice presupposes. The organic theory is an hypothesis which explains the Soviet Union (Marxism, however, is a mechanical, not an organic, theory); the mechanical theory, or at least the 'consent' variety of this theory, explains the United States. Organic States, it is true, have certain characteristics better described in terms of a mechanical theory; mechanical States have organic characteristics; but the hypothetical method, in this as in other fields, is compelled to select those characteristics which appear to predominate.

In discussing organic theories Mr. Weldon has something to say about Catholic theory.<sup>1</sup> His misconception of it is a common one, and the utterances of a few Catholic writers—those, for example, strongly influenced by De Maistre and, later, by Maurras—may have done something to justify it. But any reference to the primary sources would show Mr. Weldon that he is seriously mistaken.<sup>2</sup> It is true that traditional Catholic teaching on the State is often expressed in terms of the analogy of organism; that it has taken over from mediaeval Aristotelianism the notion of the State as a *societas perfecta* having a common good; and that it is always and everywhere opposed to the mechanical theory, whether this be of the liberal or of the Marxist type. But he has not seen that St. Thomas's adaptation of Aristotle involves a more radical transformation of the theory than appears on the surface. He writes that Aristotle was in the Middle Ages 'regarded as having expounded once and for all the whole truth about reality in so far as this could be achieved by the human reason without the special light given by the Christian revelation'.<sup>3</sup> There is a measure of truth in this. But the point is that the light of revelation is not merely something added to the total of knowledge; it is something which also transforms naturally acquired knowledge.

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., pp. 39, 40.

<sup>2</sup> The view he attributes (p. 39) to Catholicism suggests a division of labour between Church and State that belongs rather to the doctrine of Marsilius than to traditional Catholic teaching.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

St. Thomas's teaching on man's supernatural end, an end pursued and attained within the Church, made it quite impossible for him to subscribe to anything like an organic theory in Mr. Weldon's, or even in Aristotle's, sense of the term. The State cannot in Catholic thought be the kind of organic society described by Mr. Weldon simply because the Church is the only fully organic society; and the Church is fully organic because it is not simply a human society, but a divine-human society. The Hegelian State is a kind of parody of the Church, both in its constitution and its mission. Apart from all this, it is surely plain that the whole doctrine of Natural Law (as stated, for example, in the Encyclical of Pius XI, *Mit Brennender Sorge*) is radically hostile to the principles of the modern organic State.

In terms of practice, the possibility of there being inherent limitations on State-power only occurs with the rise of a vast eccumenical institution, the Church, over against the powers of the political order. The theoretical statement of the consequent position is that of St. Augustine: the contrast between the two cities and the division within man himself between citizen and pilgrim. Lord Acton more than once pointed out that the claims of the Church over against those of the State provided the conditions for the development of free institutions and constitutional rule. It would be a mistake to see this development as no more than the result of the reciprocal limitation of the powers of State and Church. This is a part of the truth; but it is also true that the Christian anthropology soaked imperceptibly into the common consciousness so that it came to be taken for granted that man is directed to an end transcending the political order and that this end is the concern of a spiritual society. Every political philosopher from St. Augustine to Hobbes has to take this problem seriously—even those who decide, perhaps a little sadly, that a society which is summoned to two loyalties will not work satisfactorily and that there are only two possible solutions: a theocracy; or the Absolute State. The solution of the Absolute State is at least as old as Hobbes and in a sense goes back to Marsilius and the Nominalists; but there is continual difficulty in enforcing it, as civil wars, revolutions, and struggles for individual and corporate liberties show. But in political speculation there is no question that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we find, beginning with Rousseau, a strong revival of the classical politics in which the State, now the Nation-State, is treated as the only

*societas perfecta*. The real revival of classical political theory is in the modern period, not the Middle Ages.

To return to our discussion of Mr. Weldon's argument. If political theories are hypotheses capable of being empirically verified, then it is plain that if there is more than one such hypothesis, and that if two or more hypotheses are verifiable in relation to existing States, then there can be no universally valid political theory. A political theory is valid as descriptive; and if there is, even at the highest level of generality, no one description applicable to all human societies, then there is no such thing as *the* theory of the State. We are then faced with the question: In what sense are political theories commensurable? Are they commensurable in such a way that we can compare, say, the theory which explains the Soviet Union with that which explains the United Kingdom and then go on to assert that one or other of the theories *ought* to be furthered by our actions or that one of the theories is *better* than the other? Mr. Weldon does not think we are entitled to make either of these assertions, and if his general argument is correct this must be true. To compare one theory with another and to assert that one is better than the other would be to presuppose a third theory which is not descriptive but *normative*, and as such valid for two societies very differently constituted; but Mr. Weldon believes he has shown there can be no such theory. Of course, one can say: I like this theory; or: I prefer this theory to that. And Mr. Weldon knows that people do in fact pass moral judgements upon political theories; but he deals with this point when he discusses the status and meaning of moral judgements.

He holds 'that different people hold really and radically different views about right conduct'.<sup>1</sup> Since political and moral theories are interdependent, and since the differences between political theories and between actual States are at bottom differences over moral issues—over the nature of the good life, as an old-fashioned philosopher might put it—then it follows, either that such differences can be resolved theoretically—and if this were possible it would mean that what appeared to be divergent theories were not such—or that such differences are ultimate, and in this case different political theories are incommensurable. Mr. Weldon inclines to the latter conclusion. Hume wrote: 'When you pronounce any action or character to be vicious, you mean nothing, but that from the constitution of your nature you have a

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 212.

sentiment or feeling of blame from the contemplation of it'; and Mr. Weldon uses, I think as approving it, this quotation as an epigraph to his fifth chapter. Moral views are as ultimate, and as various, as individual tastes. There is no more sense in arguing about these ultimate differences than there is in arguing about the respective merits of beef and mutton.

Mr. Weldon believes that his theory has certain practical advantages. Anyone who entertains this theory is unlikely to be filled with crusading ardour on behalf of an ideology, and if the profession of the theory were widespread there would be a lowering of the political temperature, notably in international politics. Once we recognize that differences of moral outlook are ultimate and cannot be resolved by any dialectic, we see that in personal life and in the life of politics we can enjoy peace and tranquillity only if we are content to accept as brute facts the views of those from whom we differ on moral issues. Mr. Weldon (I think) sees that this rests on the possibility of showing that at least peace and tranquillity are goods making a common claim upon the disputants, and this may explain the paradoxical—in the light of his general argument—character of his final remarks: 'As soon as the empirical basis of all political theory is clearly recognized, there is no good reason why States of essentially different types should not co-exist perfectly happily.'<sup>1</sup> (This might be true if the only 'good reasons' for conflict were ideological.) This is a demand for the universal acceptance of a single theory of politics, the theory that all particular theories are generalization founded upon the experiences of particular societies; and a demand that none should raise the question of the comparability in respect of moral worth of the theory and practice of two or more societies. It will be seen that Mr. Weldon is postulating a universally valid theory of ethics and politics. It is a very queer theory, for it is the conclusion of an argument which sets out to show that a universally valid theory is impossible. Of course, Mr. Weldon has stated his theory with some care, and as stated it would be difficult to reduce it to a formal *reductio ad absurdum* such as this, without calling upon premisses he would repudiate. He would no doubt maintain that there is a distinction between a political theory and a theory, claiming universal validity or validity within the limits of empirical investigation, about political theories.

Something like Mr. Weldon's moral and political theory is

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 301, 302.



certainly very widely held, at least in this country, both within the universities and outside them. Those of us who find it sophistical have some obligation to deal with it; for it is not only a false doctrine—many who do not see how to refute it nevertheless feel it to be false—it is also a doctrine likely to have bad consequences. If the dogmatic temper deplored by Mr. Weldon has often proved an evil, bringing intolerance and persecution, the temper represented by the passage from Hume quoted above has had, and is liable to have, consequences even more disastrous. To put it plainly, if Mr. Weldon is right, rational discourse about moral questions is impossible, except in a sense which means they are not *moral* questions. It is true that Mr. Weldon is careful to state his moral theory in such a way that he is not committed to the view that moral judgements are statements about facts.<sup>1</sup> Moral judgements are for him expressions of sentiments. In so far as we compare moral judgements, there is no way of comparing them as, for instance, we compare two statements that claim to be statements about the same facts. We can only point out that A has one moral sentiment, B another. Society is possible in so far as there is some coincidence of moral sentiments. Now, it is surely true that the kind of coincidence of moral sentiments upon which society rests is also a coincidence of moral judgements understood by the persons concerned as being something more than statements of moral sentiments; as judgements, that is, resting upon universally valid principles and as being applications, correct or mistaken, of these principles to particular cases. Were the theory of moral sentiments in the form held by Mr. Weldon to gain anything like general acceptance, there would certainly be no room for the dogmatic temper; but it is also hard to see what room there could be for moral conviction. It is astonishing that Mr. Weldon can say that a moral issue is 'an issue on which people are prepared to risk losing their lives, or at least to incur real sacrifice as distinct from minor personal inconvenience'.<sup>2</sup> I cannot be asked to venture my life for a moral sentiment which is no more than a personal or group idiosyncrasy. Perhaps Mr. Weldon tacitly assumes as a major premiss that a man ought to act *as if* his moral sentiments had universal validity;<sup>3</sup> but this would be to make a universally valid judgement and would thus overthrow his own theory. In any

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 221 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 230.

<sup>3</sup> He does say at one point that 'for the most part . . . it is sensible to act *as if* certain moral principles were universally valid (though we know that they are not) . . .' Ibid., p. 278.



case, the *als ob* theory works only for those who are ignorant that their presuppositions have this hypothetical character.

How one is to treat a view such as that of Mr. Weldon (and here his book is being considered simply as an exceptionally clear and pleasantly written expression of a view shared by many other educated persons) is a matter of some difficulty. It is tempting to suppose that the task is to produce the kind of dialectical refutation which every student learns how to use against, say, Rousseau's contractual theory or Mill's Utilitarianism. Mr. Weldon warns us in advance that this would not impress him and that he would not attempt to meet any refutation which presupposed what were alleged to be universally valid principles. We may think Mr. Weldon wrongheaded in this; but it is certainly true that this kind of refutation would have little effect upon those who in general share his view. Any treatment designed to show the unsoundness of his view will have to go, as it were, behind the view itself. We have seen that the basis of the view is not to be found within moral and political theory but is rather to be found in the denial, on Kantian or empiricist grounds, of the possibility of metaphysics.

A direct approach on the question of metaphysics, an attempt to revive discussion of metaphysical issues in terms of the classical concepts, is likely to prove fruitless,<sup>1</sup> unless the empiricist is brought by considerations derived from outside philosophy to approach the subject freshly. A fruitful approach is likely to be indirect. The following suggestions are made in the belief that we do not so much need polemical replies to the empiricist theory of morals and politics as unproved methods in the positive exposition of Catholic teaching on the subject.

It is plain to most of those—of whom the present writer is one—not nurtured in the scholastic tradition, that the exposition by Catholic writers of the traditional moral and political theory is often, in its temper and terminology, such as to make small appeal to and almost no impression upon those nurtured in another tradition. (There are, of course, brilliant exceptions to this generalization, of whom Fr. D'Arcy, Fr. Gerald Vann, and Mr. Christopher Dawson in this country may be mentioned without causing others to feel slighted.) Again, while no Catholic doubts or can doubt either the truth or, in our day, the utility of the moral and political teaching of the Church, particular

<sup>1</sup> A useful result of the otherwise barren Third Programme discussion between Fr. Copleston and Bertrand Russell was to make this quite plain.

expositions of it often strike one as inadequate. The vice of legalism in moral theology is an old story, and the return to the primal sources, Holy Scripture, the Fathers, and a St. Thomas no longer seen through the spectacles of a rationalism at bottom Cartesian, is already showing impressive results in this and other fields. But in political theory similar results are not so plain.<sup>1</sup> Many criticisms can be stated. The exposition is too often remote from the problems that weigh most heavily upon us today.<sup>2</sup> The language draws too heavily upon scholastic terms and thus presupposes a kind of intellectual experience not to be had, in this country, outside the seminary. Indignation too often leads to a certain loss of balance and a consequent imprecision, to say nothing of a lack of charity. ('Totalitarianism' has surely become a meaningless term in Catholic writing when we find it applied to England under the Tudors and to Hobbes's *Leviathan*, as well as to the Third Reich and the U.S.S.R.) Above all, perhaps, the exposition tends to disregard the complex historical experience of contemporary man. This is not only—perhaps not chiefly—a question of the experience of the Reformation and post-Reformation periods. It is rather a question of the profounder grasp possible today of the size and many-sidedness of the whole historical process, its vastness, so much greater than classical or mediaeval man could have known, the extent to which the State is a fluid and *historical* category, the rude approximations to the Moral Law which history presents, and the variety and the number of the aberrations from it. It is also true that, although it seems so often that the Faith has evaporated from the modern world and that our society is in a state of dereliction, the Faith has in fact penetrated our society far more deeply than it penetrated the society of the Middle Ages; and it is this which has given the philosophical heresies of our period, the false religions and the political utopias, a creative energy and a power over the human spirit far surpassing anything in antiquity. The glass within which man now strives to behold

<sup>1</sup> That I may not seem ungracious I should like to mention, as exceptionally valuable and stimulating works in this field, Dr. Rommen's *The State in Catholic Thought*, the whole magnificent work—the fruit of practice as well as of speculation—of Don Sturzo, and M. Maritain's *Humanisme Intégral*.

<sup>2</sup> For example, we read that the Thomist doctrine of the State 'determines the exact measure of obedience that must be given to the State by means of a logical, coherent definition of law and the eminently juridical treatment of Nullity, which affirms that an unjust law is no law at all.' (J. F. Rogers, S.J., 'Law and Political Power', in *Under God and the Law*. Papers read to the Thomas More Society of London, Second Series, 1949, p. 121.) The context makes plain what is here intended but the words may have a hollow ring for the troubled citizen of any modern State.

his true features is cracked. But the crack is the flaw in human self-sufficiency disclosed by the rending asunder of time itself in the Incarnation and the Redemption. Man essays desperately, and always without success, to grasp his own nature by his own self-scrutiny; the attempt is no longer possible and at bottom he knows it; for he is haunted by the recollection, often buried deeply, that God has visited and redeemed his people. He knows obscurely that he can understand himself, his institutions, his beliefs, only in relation to God. A conclusion in politics, or in anything else, linked with an awareness of the living God, is more than a conclusion. 'Many a man will live and die upon a dogma; no man will be a martyr for a conclusion.'<sup>1</sup> It is this which leads to the dogmatic temper deplored by Mr. Weldon, a temper which can be forbidding and brutal. *Corruptio optimi pessima*. But the uglier manifestations of the dogmatic temper in religion are scarcely the common evils of our own day.

The moral for us may be that Catholic teaching on moral and political questions is most moving when an attempt is made to speak not so much to the abstract inquirer or objector of the textbooks on apologetics as to man in his present condition; and when it is given not as a corpus of philosophical conclusions taken in abstraction from what has been revealed, but as one element in the whole synthesis, a living synthesis and not a frozen system, of knowledge and belief which is Catholic theology. This theology is in its steady development more and more adapted to the whole man of whom the rational or philosophic man is only the ghost, even in the case of the philosopher himself.

If anyone should ask to whom these exhortations are addressed, I suppose the best answer would be that most immediately they are addressed to the growing numbers of Catholic men and women who have been and are being trained in philosophy, history, law, and the social sciences in British universities. If we are to have, from Catholics, work on moral and political theory and fresh explorations of the problems of metaphysics comparable in depth and penetration and persuasive power to the best work of non-Christian writers, it is surely to these men and women we must look. In this as in other matters, novel responsibilities rest upon the laity who are called in our day to make actual their maturity in the body of the Church.

<sup>1</sup> J. H. Newman, *Discussions and Arguments*, 1924, p. 93.

# THE PERSISTENCE OF THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION IN INTERNATIONAL LAW

By B. A. WORTLEY

THE traditional international law applies, as Vitoria and Suarez<sup>1</sup> showed long ago, to all peoples, since all men form one human family.

Humanity is the basis of society, and we believe there is, in man, a natural instinct to condemn what he believes to be wrongdoing, irrespective of the person of the wrongdoer.

'Respect of persons' is a sin against justice, according to St. Thomas Aquinas. Christians may excuse ignorance, but they cannot regard any group as free from the obligations of the moral rules embodied in international law, or from the duty of maintaining social order based on reason and humanity. In the words of a famous diplomatic dispatch in 1938:<sup>2</sup> *'There is indeed no mystery about international law: it is nothing more than the recognition between Nations of the rules of right and fair dealing such as ordinarily obtain between individuals and which are essential for friendly intercourse.'* International law is normative; it lays down rules of conduct. It must therefore be distinguished from International relations, a subject which does not purport to be normative but merely descriptive, like any department of history. The study of what has in fact happened between states is illuminating and informative, but it does not necessarily afford rules of conduct for Statesmen and their advisers.

International law, on the other hand, does represent a *corpus* of rules with a content that is widely recognized among *civilized* peoples. This *corpus* includes *Customs*, like those regulating diplomatic intercourse between states, *multilateral international treaties*

<sup>1</sup> Both authors are now represented in the Classics of International Law published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; the Suarez volume (No. 20 of the Series) is the latest: 1944, XXI + 915 pp., including Indexes.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. note to Mexico, on Expropriation, of 22 August, 1938.

declaratory of the law (like The Hague and Red Cross Conventions governing the conduct of warfare), *precedents* of international judicial tribunals (like the International Court of Justice at The Hague) and of the numerous arbitral tribunals, and the *constant writings* of jurists and publicists throughout the Christian era, and even before that era.

All these sources are controlled and applied by the exercise of 'reason' and by reference to what the Statute of the Hague Court calls the 'general principles of law',<sup>1</sup> a conception which is the direct descendant of the law of nature of the Roman and the mediaeval lawyers. Every legal injunction represents an 'ought'; if his advice is sought, the international lawyer can always attempt to supply an answer about what ought to be done to solve a dispute in the interests of objective justice. The historic task of the law of nature has always been to supplement and correct the customary law: Maine, Pollock and Lauterpacht have all demonstrated this commonplace of jurisprudence in their own day. The lawyer's starting point is that there must be, in objective justice, an answer to any human conflict, and, it may be recalled, this is the position even when law purports to have been codified.

The attempts to formulate objective rules of law, which apply irrespective of the persons or groups involved, is a mark of civilization. And the conception of reason, and the principle of contradiction, are relevant here, since every objective decision must fit into the growing mosaic of civilized law and must apply equally to all subjects of the law. In fact, international lawyers do not hesitate to sit in judgement on the acts of sovereign states, and states accept the consequences of these judgements to a much greater extent than is popularly supposed. Any objective attempt at fairness in settling a dispute commands the assent of human reason: at least when the possessor of that faculty is not personally interested in the matter in dispute.

International law then provides objective rules even for states. In what follows, we shall consider what some representative thinkers, applying the Christian tradition, have enunciated to influence peoples, and their rulers, to observe fair dealings in their mutual relations, thus serving on the one hand to eliminate the anarchy which might be caused by unfettered sovereignty and, on the other, to regulate, by reason, the mutual relations of all parts of the whole of human Society. For international law deals with

<sup>1</sup> Art. 38 of the Statute of the Court.  
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the family of nations as a whole; it recognizes that states have an inner unity based on the common humanity of the subjects of states, and, adopting the Christian outlook, international law opposes the arbitrary withdrawal of individuals or groups, races or classes from its protection. Of course it cannot be said that the rules of international law have never been broken, but the fundamental rules go deep. Statesmen like Hitler, who can scarcely be described as practising Christians, as we shall see, have paid homage to these rules even when they were breaking them.

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One of the leading modern writers in International Law was Lassa Francis Lawrence Oppenheim. Born in Frankfort-on-Main in 1858, he settled in London in 1895, and was naturalized in 1900; he was Whewell Professor of International Law at Cambridge from 1908 until his death in 1919. His treatise on International Law in two volumes, now edited by Hirsch Lauterpacht, the present Whewell Professor, is a standard work. In this work we are reminded that 'Messianic ideals and hopes are not national only, but fully international . . . the Jews, at least at the time of Isaiah, had a presentiment of a future when all the nations of the world should be united in peace. And the Jews have given this ideal to the Christian World.'<sup>1</sup>

The assumption that peace is the ideal state of *all* mankind is the mainspring of modern conception of international law; it is the basis of the United Nations Charter. This, I believe, is as it should be. The Christian beliefs in the Common Fatherhood of God and in the common Redemption of all mankind are incompatible with any arbitrary condemnation of others to suffer the effects of anarchy or war.

For the Christian, there can be no races, and no classes, that are not entitled to have their human dignity protected by law.<sup>2</sup> International law is a barrier to all who would arbitrarily take life, or use power without restraint; the 'general principles of Law',<sup>3</sup> as we have said, are no respecters of persons, and by the general principles of law of Western Christendom all life is, *prima facie*, presumed to be innocent (as, for example, the rules of warfare designed to protect prisoners, and civilians, show). In a

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I, pp. 69, 70, 6th ed., 1946.

<sup>2</sup> Stratmann, *The Church and War*, 1928, p. 200.

<sup>3</sup> The expressions used in article 38 of the Statute of the International Court of Justice.



Christian Society every man is worthy of legal protection, irrespective of the worth of that life to society. The work, for example, of the International Refugee Organization, which by the end of August last had resettled 590,153 displaced persons, is in harmony with this Christian and non-materialist view. What matters first to the Christian is not that a society should be rich, or economically powerful, but that everyone should be given a chance of salvation in his lifetime.

No one can be indifferent to the use of, or the material results of the use of power; the Christian cannot regard power as an end in itself: *Non est potestas nisi a Deo*. But power does not justify itself, humanity is not God. Power can be abused. Political power can be abused, and it is abused with disastrous consequences to millions of human beings when peace is violated by an unjustifiable war. In this article we should like to offer a few reflections on this central problem, on the right to make war, and we may begin by considering the views of some typical Christian thinkers throughout the ages.

When, under Constantine the Great, Christianity became the religion of the Roman Empire (A.D. 306-337), Christians became more directly concerned with military and political power. Until then, many Christians shunned the career of arms since, as soldiers, they were likely to be called on to sacrifice to Pagan Gods, and they could not submit to a *participatio in sacris* of false Gods. Indeed, many martyrs met their death rather than deny their Christian faith in this way. It is noteworthy that the problem of the defence of the now officially Christian Empire began to assume great urgency in the fourth century because of the Pagan invasions. It was St. Augustine (A.D. 350-430) who notably stated the Christian attitude to War and Peace; and he had first-hand experience of the scourge of war in Italy and in North Africa. In *contra Faustum* (A.D. 398) St. Augustine said: 'A just man can fight justly for maintaining public peace . . .'<sup>1</sup> and he allowed the killing of wicked men by public authority<sup>2</sup> when such wicked men wantonly broke the peace; and thus he paved the way for the distinction between the just and the unjust war, which, however neglected from time to time by positivist legal and political theorists, is part of the Western intellectual heritage. In one of his later writings (E.g., *ad Bonifacium*, A.D. 418) St. Augustine said:

'Peace should be the object of your desire; war should be

<sup>1</sup> Cit. Eppstein, *Catholic Tradition of the Law of Nations*, p. 70.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

waged only as a necessity, and waged only that God may, by it, deliver men from that necessity and *preserve them in peace*. For peace is not sought in order to kindle war, but war is waged in order that peace may be maintained.'

St. Augustine himself knew the insecurity of innocent life and property engendered by war and, in the subsequent ages following the decline of the Roman Empire after Justinian, security of life and lawful possessions from wanton disturbance came to be regarded as one of the most desirable consequences of peace. Hence the mediaeval followers of St. Augustine, like Gratian the Canon Lawyer, who published the *Concordia discordantium Canonum* in 1148, stressed that a just war was one waged in order to regain what had been stolen (note the emphasis on property) or to repel the attack of enemies (note the emphasis on personality).<sup>1</sup> It was left to St. Thomas Aquinas to sum up the Christian doctrine in his *Summa* (2<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>ae</sup> 9.XL) when he required lawful authority,<sup>2</sup> a just cause and a right intention before a war might be just.

War can still only take place as a result of the exercise of lawful authority; only recognized States, the Security Council on behalf of States, or recognized insurgents who in fact control a province and fight according to the laws of war, may be considered as belligerents even today; and the law of 'recognition of belligerency' requires, as did St. Thomas, 'belligerent authority' to distinguish war from piracy, murder or brigandage.

St. Thomas pointed out that the principle of the Common Weal justifies alike the action of the Prince, or as we should say the Government, in defending its citizens from internal and external force.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> In order that a war may be just [there is required] the authority of the Prince by whose order the war is undertaken; for it does not belong to a private individual to make war, because in order to obtain justice he can have recourse to the judgement of his Superior. . . . 'Neither does it belong to a private individual to summon a multitude of people together as must be done to engage in war. But, since the case of the State is confided to Princes, it is to them that it belongs to defend the City, the kingdom or the Province which is subject to their authority.'

<sup>3</sup> 'Just as it is permissible for them [the Princes] to defend these [their citizens] by the material sword, against those who trouble them from within, by punishing the evil doers according to the word of the Apostle:

"The prince beareth not the sword in vain for he is the minister of God to execute His vengeance against him who doeth evil." (Romans, xiii, 4.) So, in like manner, it is to them that it belongs to bear the sword in combat for the defence of the State against external enemies . . . and he quotes St. Augustine:

'The natural order, which would have peace among men requires that the decision and power to declare war should belong to princes.' The presumption is that an innocent society has a right to continue to exist and to have its existence protected.

Even one with *prima facie* authority to declare war, could not make war for any reason, according to St. Thomas,<sup>1</sup> but only when justice imperatively required the righting of a wrong.

Again, even when a war has been declared by a legitimate belligerent, and for a just cause, it may, as St. Thomas says, become unlawful by 'the perversity of intention of those that make it'. It will be observed that St. Thomas stresses a conception of fault or injury, he does not allow war to be justified by mere claims of arbitrary rights over some class, or race, nor by any other arbitrary or non-moral choice on the part of a belligerent.

The shadow of the Holy Roman Empire faded in the Middle Ages, and the new national states each claimed the prerogative to make war. The Spaniards had fought the Moors in Spain and expelled them in 1492, the year America was discovered; they had long been used to making war, as had the English and the French, without the authority of the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Moreover, the mediaeval Spaniards had had to fight against non-Christian warriors whose religion promised them bliss if they died in battle and whose whole outlook was conditioned by their conception of the Jihad, or Holy War to impose Islam on the rest of the world.<sup>2</sup> They were therefore early faced with the problem of war waged by enemies of the Faith. When therefore the Spaniards followed Pizarro and Cortez to America, it was not the problem of lawful authority which exercised their thinkers so much as the problem of the just cause and the right intention. With this in mind when thinking about the current problems raised by Colonial expansion in America in the sixteenth century, Francisco de Vitoria enunciated with great clarity and vigour a humane doctrine of international law relating to Colonial problems<sup>3</sup> and to war generally.

The Americas, said Vitoria, were not *res derelicta*, they were possessed by the native inhabitants, and the fact that these were pagans with revolting customs did not allow the Spaniards to take their lands and properties. The most the Spaniards could do was to protect, if necessary by force, rights *lawfully acquired* by free trade and travel; any converts to Christianity might be safeguarded from attack.

<sup>1</sup> 'In the second place, there must be a *just Cause*; that is to say, those attacked must have, by a fault, deserved to be attacked.'

<sup>2</sup> *The Law of War and Peace in Islam*, Majid Khadduri. (London, Luzac & Co., 1941.)

<sup>3</sup> See my article in 24 *Transactions of the Grotius Society*, p. 147, at p. 164.

Incidentally, the doctrine of the protection of rights lawfully acquired abroad, is still the basis of claims made by Governments on behalf of their subjects after they have exhausted any local remedies.

Vitoria, then, unlike his Mohammedan contemporaries, and some of his more ruthless countrymen, refused to countenance a war solely on account of difference of religion. Nor was glory, or the desire for enrichment, enough to justify a war: for no one may arbitrarily enrich himself at the expense of another. Weakness gives no rights to the strong, but rather calls for protection. Vitoria did great service, too, when he pointed out the corollary of the theory of the just war. A just war was limited from the start by its objects, namely by the reparation claimed, and the need of securing such reparation. The expression 'reparations' in modern treaties of peace can only be explained by reference to the principle of the just war: modern treaties of peace stress claims to reparation and restitution and to future security.

Grotius, the Great Dutchman of the seventeenth century, followed St. Thomas and Vitoria in saying that 'there is only a single and just cause for commencing war, namely a wrong received'.

Unfortunately, as Brierly<sup>1</sup> has pointed out, Grotius and many of the writers who followed him in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries . . . 'fell back on the lame conclusion that the only practical course was not to ask third states to judge of the lawfulness or otherwise of a war, but to leave that question to the conscience of the belligerents'.

The Swiss, Vattel, is typical of the developments in the eighteenth century: he was much quoted in England and in America in the nineteenth century, possibly because his work served to bolster up the ever-widening claims of sovereignty. Vattel pays lip service to the Christian principles regarding the necessity of a just cause<sup>2</sup> in Chapter 12 of his *Law of Nations*.

His statement of principle might possibly have been more

<sup>1</sup> *Law of Nations*, 4th ed., 449, p. 34. When Brierly states (p. 34) that the distinction between lawful and unlawful war never became part of actual international law we respectfully differ. The absence, in Grotius's day, of any doctrine of impartial neutrality shows that in practice the distinction was accepted, and states did attempt to judge the justice of war in the light of principle.

<sup>2</sup> 183. He who is engaged in war derives all his right from the justice of his cause. The unjust adversary who attacks or threatens him,—who with-holds what belongs to him,—in a word, who does him an injury,—lays him under the necessity of defending himself or of doing himself justice, by force of arms; he authorizes him in all the acts of hostility necessary for obtaining complete satisfaction. Whoever therefore takes up

effective if he had not, in Chapter 13, denied the right of one Sovereign to judge another's conduct.<sup>1</sup>

arms without a lawful cause, can absolutely have no right whatever: every act of hostility that he commits is an act of injustice.

184. He is chargeable with all the evils, all the horrors of the war: all the effusion of blood, the desolation of families, the rapine, the acts of violence, the ravages, the conflagrations, are his works and his crimes. He is guilty of a crime against the enemy, whom he attacks, oppresses, and massacres, without cause: he is guilty of a crime against his people, whom he forces into acts of injustice, and exposes to danger, without reason or necessity—against those of his subjects who are ruined or distressed by the war—who lose their lives, their property, or their health, in consequence of it: finally, he is guilty of a crime against mankind in general, whose peace he disturbs, and to whom he sets a pernicious example. Shocking catalogue of miseries and crimes! Dreadful account to be given to the King of kings, to the common Father of man! May this slight sketch strike the eyes of the rulers of nations, of princes and their ministers! Why may not we expect some benefit from it? Are we to suppose that the great are wholly lost to all sentiments of honour, of humanity, of duty, and of religion? And should our weak voice, throughout the whole succession of ages, prevent even one single war, how gloriously would our studies and our labour be rewarded!

185. He who does an injury is bound to repair the damage, or to make adequate satisfaction if the evil be irreparable, and even to submit to punishment, if the punishment be necessary, either as an example, or for the safety of the party offended, and for that of human society. In this predicament stands a prince who is the author of an unjust war. He is under an obligation to restore whatever he has taken—to send back the prisoners at his own expense—to make compensation to the enemy for the calamities and losses he has brought on him—to reinstate ruined families—to repair, if it were possible, the loss of a father, a son, a husband.—*The Law of Nations, or, Principles of the Law of Nature, applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns*, Fourth Edition, Book III, Ch. 12, pp. 378–9.

<sup>1</sup> All the doctrines we have laid down in the preceding chapter, are evidently deduced from sound principles—from the eternal rules of justice: they are so many separate articles of that sacred law which nature, or the divine author of nature, has prescribed to nations. He alone whom justice and necessity has armed, has a right to make war; he alone has power to attack his enemy, to deprive him of life, and wrest from him his goods and possessions. Such is the decision of the necessary law of nations, or the law of nature, which nations are strictly bound to observe: it is the inviolable rule that each ought conscientiously to follow. But in the contests of nations and sovereigns who live together in a state of nature, how can this rule be enforced? They acknowledge no superior. Who then shall be judge between them, to assign to each his rights and obligations—to say to the one, 'You have a right to take up arms, to attack your enemy, and subdue him by force' . . . and to the other, 'Every act of hostility that you commit will be an act of injustice; your victories will be so many murders, your conquests rapines and robberies.' Every free and sovereign state has a right to determine, according to the dictates of her own conscience, what her duties require for her, and what she can or cannot do with justice. If other nations take upon themselves to judge of her conduct, they invade her liberty, and infringe her most valuable rights: and, moreover, each party asserting that they have justice on their own side, arrogate to themselves all the rights of war, and maintain that their enemy has none. His hostilities are so many acts of robbery, so many infractions of the law of nations, in the punishment of which all states should unite. The decision of the controversy, and so the justice of the cause, is so far from being forwarded by it, that the quarrel will become more bloody, more calamitous in its effects, and also more difficult to terminate. Nor is this all: the neutral nations themselves will be drawn into the dispute, and involved in the quarrel. If an unjust war cannot, in its effect, confer any right, no certain possession can be obtained of any thing taken in war, until some acknowledged judge (and there is none such between nations) shall have definitively pronounced concerning the justice of the cause: and things so acquired will ever remain liable to be claimed, as property carried off by robbers . . .

'Let us then leave the strictness of the necessary law of nature to the conscience of sovereigns . . . ' op. cit., p. 381.



Having decided this, Vattel drew the quite unnecessary conclusions that 'regular war, as to its effects, is to be accounted just on both sides', and that 'the justice of the cause being reputed equal between two enemies, whatever is permitted to the one in virtue of the state of war, is also permitted to the other'. His subsequent qualifications do not really reduce the dangerous nature of his doctrine.<sup>1</sup>

Vattel's subjective doctrine paved the way to the claims of Sovereigns to be sole judges of their own cause, and for the 'impartial neutrality' of the nineteenth-century doctrines to be found, as H.E. Judge McNair showed in his inaugural lecture at Cambridge,<sup>2</sup> in many English and American writers of the early twentieth century.

Brierly has said that: 'The foundation of the League of Nations in 1919 marks the first real attempt to falsify this confession of weakness and to embody in actual law the cardinal principles of Grotius's (and we may add his predecessors') system.'

The wheel has turned the full circle. The Kellogg Pact, signed by all the principal belligerents in the recent war, renounced war as an instrument of national policy; it is still, in the writer's view, a binding treaty setting out the traditional Christian view that national desires are not enough alone to justify recourse to war. The breach of that Treaty was the basis on which the Nazi leaders were arraigned at Nuremberg; and the Allied Judges from Britain, France, U.S.A., and U.S.S.R. who participated in the trial clearly indicated the unlawfulness of breaking the pledged word, and they all admitted the unlawfulness of an aggressive war of expansion undertaken in violation of solemn undertakings and without any genuine attempt at settlement.

<sup>1</sup> We must never forget that this voluntary law of nations which is admitted only through necessity, and with a view to avoid greater evils (paras. 188, 189), does not, to him who takes up arms in an unjust cause, give any real right that is capable of justifying him to the benefit of the external effect of the law, and to impunity among mankind. This sufficiently appears from what we have said in establishing the voluntary law of nations. The sovereign, therefore, whose arms are not sanctioned by justice, is not the less unjust, or less guilty of violating the sacred law of nature, although that law itself (with a view to avoid aggravating the evils of human society by an attempt to prevent them) requires that he be allowed to enjoy the same external rights as justly belong to his enemy. In the same manner, the civil law authorizes a debtor to refuse payment of his debts in a case of prescription: but he then violates his duty: he takes advantage of a law which was enacted with a view to prevent the endless increase of lawsuits; but his conduct is not justifiable upon any grounds of genuine right.—*op. cit.*, pp. 381-3.

<sup>2</sup> *British Yearbook of International Law*, 1936, 'Collective Security', p. 150.



Lord Wright, the Chairman of the U.N. War Crimes Commission, summed up the matter in his introductory chapter to the *History of the U.N. War Crimes Commission and the development of the Laws of War*.<sup>1</sup>

I wish to emphasize my opinion that the difference between a war of aggression and a just war is fundamental and that the attempts to obscure it in comparatively recent times ought to fail, and have failed. I have sought to refute some misleading conclusions, as I regard them, from a fallacious idea of the extent of the Doctrine of Sovereignty. In particular I wish to protest against the idea that the Doctrine of Sovereignty offers a shield of immunity in the case of acts of unlawful aggression. Sovereignty is not the same as autocratic and arbitrary power. It is a limited or regulated doctrine which cannot be extended beyond its proper limits, which are primarily, but not necessarily, the limits of the sovereign states over boundaries. I have wished also to protest against an illegitimate application of the idea of acts of state; that concept I think does not justify the commission by nations or individuals of crimes or other unlawful acts in the realm of international law.

Again says Lord Wright: '... The difference between a just war and an unjust war, a distinction which is ancient enough, has been reinstated.'<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

The rule that a war should only be waged for a lawful reason was recognized on the 22 August, 1929, by Hitler when he is reported to have said to his Commanders-in-Chief, according to the Judgement at Nuremberg:<sup>3</sup>

I shall give a propaganda cause for starting the war—never mind whether it be plausible or not. The victor shall not be asked later on whether we (*sic*) told the truth or not. In starting and making a war, not the right is what matters, but victory.

The implication was that even a poor cause was better than none at all, and that it was for the propaganda machine and the generals to do their best with it.

<sup>1</sup> H.M.S.O., 1940, pp. 19, 20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. vii. For a recent (1946) work, see *La théologie de la Guerre Juste*, by Mgr de Solages (Desclée de Brouwer). This short work gives a useful and critical account of the work of Régout and de la Brière of the Society of Jesus.

<sup>3</sup> P. 25 of Cmd. 6964/46.

It was thus that Hitler paid lip service to the Christian tradition of the Just War and, what it is important to recognize is that Hitler thereby recognized the persistence of that tradition in his people's minds. He merely assumed that he could hoodwink a sufficient number of the conscientious.

The circumstances surrounding the signature of the Russo-German Treaty of 1939 are equally significant. If we are to believe the U.S. collection of documents on *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941*,<sup>1</sup> this treaty was signed by Ribbentrop and Molotov at Moscow on the day after the above-quoted speech by Hitler to his Generals; by this treaty of non-aggression, the parties purported to recognize the binding force of the pledged word. Public opinion in Russia, however, was not, we believe, so easily deceived by German assurances; the news of Germany's aggression on Poland was received with evident apprehension by the Russian people. The German Ambassador is said to have reported on 6 September, 1939:<sup>2</sup>

The sudden alteration in the policy of the Soviet Government, after years of propaganda directed expressly against [*German aggression*], is still not very well understood by the [*Russian*] population. Especially the statements of official agitators to the effect that Germany is no longer an aggressor, run up against considerable doubt.

[The deliberate German aggression in Poland had taken place a few days before!]

The Soviet Government [continues Schulenberg, the German Ambassador] is doing everything to change the attitude of the population here [in Russia] towards Germany. The *press* is as though it had been transformed. Attacks on the conduct of Germany have not only ceased completely, but the portrayal of events in the field of foreign politics is based to an outstanding degree on German reports, anti-German literature has been removed from the book trade, etc.

The German Ambassador apparently continued with typical Nazi insouciance: 'The beginning of the war between Germany and Poland has powerfully affected public opinion here [in Russia] and aroused a new fear in extensive groups that the Soviet Union may be drawn into war.' He then gives his explanation. 'Mistrust sown for years against Germany, in spite of effective

<sup>1</sup> Pp. 76/8.

<sup>2</sup> *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941*, p. 88, our italics and insets.

propaganda which is being carried on in party and business gatherings, cannot be so quickly removed. The fear is expressed by the population that Germany, after she has defeated Poland, may turn against the Soviet Union.'

Now was this apprehension of the Russian people based solely on the result of propaganda? Might it not have arisen from the existence among them of the Christian tradition condemning unjust wars of aggression? This reasonable tradition may well have influenced the Russian people in their reported refusal to take the Russo-German Treaty at its face value. 'By their works ye shall know them.' The German action spoke louder than the propaganda machine.

Again, it is significant that when, about the 10 September, 1939, the Russians themselves decided to enter Poland, the German Ambassador is said to have reported:<sup>1</sup>

Then Molotov came to the political side of the matter and stated that the Soviet Government had intended to take the occasion of the further advance of German troops to declare that Poland was falling apart and that it was necessary for the Soviet Union, in consequence, to come to the aid of the Ukrainians and the White Russians 'threatened' by Germany. This argument was to make the intervention of the Soviet Union plausible to the masses and at the same time avoid giving the Soviet Union the appearance of an aggressor.

And again four days later,<sup>2</sup> on 14 September, 1939, the German Ambassador telegraphed:

Molotov summoned me today at 4 p.m., and stated that the Red Army had reached a state of preparedness sooner than anticipated. Soviet action could therefore take place sooner than he had assumed at our last conversation . . . for the *political instruction of Soviet action* (the collapse of Poland and protection of Russian 'minorities') *it was of the greatest importance not to take action until the Governmental Centre of Poland, the City of Warsaw had fallen.* . . . I would direct your attention to today's article in *Pravda* carried by D.N.B., which will be followed by a similar article in *Izvestia* tomorrow. The articles serve (to prepare) the political motivation mentioned by Molotov for Soviet intervention.

The Russian Government was *not* anxious to appear as an aggressor: it recognized that its subjects had consciences: today, after thirty-two years of Bolshevism, it is apparently a matter of

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 91; our italics.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 92; our italics.

concern to the Rulers of Russia that religious notions still survive in their people.<sup>1</sup>

The Nazis had scruples about affronting the moral sense of ordinary folk in October 1939, for, when Russia offered to cede the City of Vilna and its environs to Lithuania, provided the Lithuanians ceded part of their territory to Germany, the German Ambassador is reported to have said:<sup>2</sup>

Molotov's suggestion seems to me harmful, as in the eyes of the world it would make us appear as 'robbers' of Lithuanian territory, while the Soviet Government figures as the donor. . . . I would ask you to consider whether it might not be advisable for us, by a separate Secret German-Soviet protocol, to forgo the cession of the Lithuanian strip of territory until the Soviet Union actually incorporates Lithuania, an idea on which, I believe, the arrangement concerning Lithuania was originally based.

Attempts to placate the public conscience, coupled with displays of annoyance when the pledged word is broken, are exhibited throughout the published documents on *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941*. For instance, in October 1939,<sup>3</sup> Weizäcker, writing to the German Minister in Finland, says:

Our relationship to the three Baltic States rests on the well-known non-aggression pact; our relationship to Denmark likewise. Norway and Sweden have declined non-aggression pacts . . . our traditionally good relations with the Finns do not require any special political agreement.

It would appear that the Germans (and they were not alone in this contradictory attitude) attempted to obtain security for themselves by non-aggressive pacts, with Russia and Denmark for example; but they did not intend to be bound by such pacts themselves, as their subsequent action against Denmark and Russia shows. The fact is the Nazi ruling clique did not believe that the same law ruled the master race as governed other races: the Herrenvolk might expect others to be bound to them, but not to be bound to others.

A duality of attitude on the part of political leaders to treaty obligations may well follow from the belief that international law is merely a means for the extension of empire, or for the further-

<sup>1</sup> B.B.C. report on Russian Press, 10 November, 1949.

<sup>2</sup> *Nazi-Soviet Relations 1939-1941*, p. 112.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

ance of an inevitable struggle between races or between social classes. Such beliefs are clearly incompatible with the universal and Christian tradition of the modern international law of civilized states.

By the United Nations Charter the preservation of the peace of the world is the primary object of the organization it sets up. And the Security Council is the organ primarily charged with keeping that peace. At present the Council has no forces of its own, and no atom bombs, and the prospect of the Council taking any action of a military character seems remote. But the Charter recognizes the traditional right of 'individual or collective self-defence if an armed attack occurs'.<sup>1</sup> If our thesis is right, there may be widespread support for the Christian tradition condemning unlawful attack, and in many hitherto unexpected places. 'When governments do not observe international law, public conscience is perturbed.'<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Art. 51.

<sup>2</sup> Sturzo in 1937 *Hibbert Journal*, p. 20.



# MAURICE BLONDEL<sup>1</sup>

## A Study of his Achievement

By AUGUSTE VALENSIN

THE philosopher Maurice Blondel died on 4 June, 1949, in his eighty-fifth year, after a lifetime of study devoted to the loftiest of all problems.<sup>2</sup> Posterity will declare whether he succeeded in his aim, which was nothing less than to give philosophy a new orientation.

The inducement is strong to yield to the appeal of reminiscence, to the promptings of friendship, and so end by praising the qualities of the man. But he himself never liked people talking about *him*. 'My ideas,' he would say, 'not me.' It may be that those who knew and loved him best should not hasten to take advantage of a freedom sadly acquired, or ignore a wish that can be no longer expressed. There is a risk, too, of harming him as a philosopher by insisting too soon on qualities he had that were other than philosophical. The human and Christian virtues, which Maurice Blondel exemplified so splendidly, will be better seen in their true and striking grandeur when the time arrives to praise them as they deserve, when more care has been devoted to revealing the exceptional vigour of his mind, and the true significance and originality of his teaching. A psychologist and man of letters, a moralist as well as an intellectual guide, Maurice Blondel was also a deeply religious man, with a practical humility that matched the considered daring of his thought; yet officially, and for his fellows, he wished to be first and foremost a philosopher. It

<sup>1</sup> This article was first published in the November 1949 issue of *Études* (15 Rue Monsieur, Paris, 7<sup>e</sup>).

<sup>2</sup> Maurice Blondel was born at Dijon on 2 November, 1861. He matriculated in 1881, took his degree in 1886, and submitted his successful thesis for a doctorate at the Sorbonne on 7 June, 1893. It was objected to him, at the time, that he had misrepresented the neutrality of the reason, and it was only through the good offices of Emile Boutroux that he was appointed *Maître de Conférences* in the Faculty of Lille (1895). It was there he wrote his famous letter on *Les Exigences de la Pensée contemporaine en matière d'Apologétique*. On 28 December, 1896, he was appointed to the Faculty of Literature at Aix-Marseille, where he was to teach for thirty years.

is to do him the best service not to allow our admiration to wander.

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The philosophy of Maurice Blondel is set forth and expounded in several long books and in numerous articles;<sup>1</sup> but in our view the germ of it, organically complete, is contained in the famous thesis, written for his doctorate in 1893, which he called: *L'Action: Essai d'une Critique de la Vie et d'une Science de la Pratique*.

There are two elements in this book: one is a compound of psychological analyses, of meditations, metaphysical and ethical, and studies in the by-ways of philosophy; and it is that which holds the attention of the ordinary reader, fascinated by the beauty of its style, and too much arrested by fruitful developments of particular themes to grapple with the unifying, but less easily discernible, *idea*. The other element consists of a systematic investigation; and it is this which, if it attains its end, cannot but open up whole new territories to philosophy, and give it as it were a completely new status. It is this investigation, pursued through 495 pages, which provides an organic unity and represents what is really the essence of the book.

Our task, here, will be to isolate, as clearly as possible, this essential element from the rest.

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It was in the course of his second year's studies at college that Maurice Blondel conceived the root idea of his thesis. As a Christian he had been struck by the indifference with which his teachers and fellow-students regarded what was for himself the most important thing of all, and by the way every advance of apologetics was finally met by a polite 'refusal to accept'. It was as if a whole realm of thought—the world of religion—were somehow excluded from the jurisdiction of philosophy, and had to be summarily regarded as having no official existence.

Reflecting on what, to him, seemed nothing less than a scandal, the young student embarked on a train of thought which might perhaps be reconstructed somewhat as follows:

If man has an inevitable destiny, which alone gives meaning to his life, philosophy cannot legitimately ignore that destiny, nor without taking account of it can it validly lay claim to complete-

<sup>1</sup> The complete bibliography will be found in Henri Duméry's *La Philosophie de l'Action* (Aubier): a philosopher's book, on a philosopher, and for philosophers.

ness. But on the other hand, if this destiny, as Christianity claims, is supernatural—if, that is to say, it transcends what may be deduced from characteristics that belong essentially to human nature—it is impossible for philosophy to discover that destiny by its own resources alone.

What follows from this? Strange as it may seem, one must draw the conclusion that philosophy is a branch of knowledge that is doomed inevitably not to be sufficient to itself.

A new idea, this; or, at any rate, one that had never been stated before in clear and technical terms. According to Maurice Blondel, one of the philosopher's functions should be to expose this essential incompetence of philosophy, and to give it a valid function by showing how this incompetence serves to delimit the essential nature of philosophy.

Once this task is accomplished, the 'scandal', referred to above, disappears—or, at least, it should. Since philosophy has itself established the existence of a problem—that of destiny—which it is both bound to ask and incapable of answering, it will be only one step further to take note of some other revelation than the revelations of nature, should any such present itself with serious claims to the attention of reason. Here, then, is an end to *a priori* indifference, an end to that final 'refusal to accept'. Philosophy will include within its scope the consideration of religion.

Narrowed down, and given its utmost precision, the original task that suggested itself to Maurice Blondel was this: to show, by the only means available to philosophy, that man aspires to some other than a purely natural end. Or, in theological terms, to show the necessity of the hypothesis that it is the supernatural, unapproachable though it is, that responds to human need.

How to accomplish such a task? And what, first of all, is to be the method of investigation? That is the crucial point; for it is on the way in which this is conceived and executed that will depend both the legitimacy of the undertaking and the possibility of its success.

Should one have recourse to metaphysical analysis, the analysis of the essence of things? Should one start with human nature, try to reveal the need for the supernatural by calculating the trajectory of the human will, determine the end of man from his beginning? Such is the method of the metaphysicians; not concerned with Dick and Tom, because what they want to know is Man as such.

But that way is barred: the supernatural, by definition, being that which transcends nature, theology would not admit there could be any hope of finding it in the restricted field of nature itself.

Suppose, then, we leave aside *a priori* reasoning and concern ourselves with plain observation. Suppose we consider human nature, not in its metaphysical essence, but in its concrete reality. What is vainly sought in 'the abstract man' may well be found in 'the historical man'. If in a particular individual there exists a need that nature cannot account for, surely this should be discoverable by observation. In this way metaphysical analysis would give place to psychological analysis: it would be the will of Dick and Tom we propose to study.

This method looks promising. In the confidences of a poet, in the personal revelations of a writer, in the hopeless confession of a criminal, in all our daily experience which shows us human beings for ever unsatisfied with what they possess—may we not discover here an infinite need, which amounts to none other than a need for the infinite? And is it a far cry from the infinite to the supernatural?

But unfortunately this road also is barred. This time it is philosophy that prevents our taking it. Interesting, it may be, this investigation of souls: useful, no doubt, and suggestive; but apart altogether from a too hasty (and, so stated, theologically erroneous) assimilation of the infinite to the supernatural, this manner of investigation could achieve no valid result. How can we be sure that what is established in the case of particular individuals will in fact be valid for all? Yet, for the success of the theory, no single unit must evade our scrutiny and continue to guard its own secret.

What then? Well, it is just here that Maurice Blondel makes his original contribution. It consists of the double discovery of a method and a dialectic.

Just as Freud was eventually to discover a process of analysis by which to reveal in the light of consciousness what lies hidden in its depths, so Blondel invented one to show to man what it is he wills, without his knowing that he wills it. Freud called his process 'psychoanalysis', thereby signifying that it differed from the ordinary observation of the psychologists. Blondel gave no name to his method, and it is this, perhaps, that has helped to cloud it with a certain ambiguity. Let us call it 'metapsychological analysis'. It consists of cataloguing, not so much the content of

consciousness as the particular content of the will, and in looking for it, not in the more or less formal expressions which are all it gives, but in the *action* which embodies it.

By the word *action* we must understand every specifically human activity, whether metaphysical or moral, aesthetic, scientific or merely practical. What, therefore, is envisaged in the term is just as much the conduct of the superficial trifler as the profound thought of the philosopher, the activities of the scholar and the artist no less than those of the artisan or the savage. The precise nature of the analysis is better explained by an example than by definition.

Take a porter. To be able to carry, unfaltering, the heavy load he *wills* to carry, he contrives to distribute it in a certain way on his back and shoulders. He arranges his counterweights, and by bending his body to a particular shape he adapts his posture to the preserving of that balance which his movement in walking constantly threatens to upset. So this porter, by the way he adjusts himself, in practice solves a mechanical problem. He does so instinctively, without having the least idea of mechanics. Tell him about the theory of it and he will probably ignore it; or rather he may believe what you tell him but say he can do very well without it. Yet his whole behaviour, his *action*, proclaims the contrary. Whatever he pretends, we philosophers are in no doubt about it: deep down, the porter's will both accepts and confirms the theories of physics.

Metapsychological analysis provides us with the instrument of investigation. It now remains to methodize the investigation itself. And this is where the Dialectic comes in. This word, broadly speaking—and in one, at any rate, of its accepted meanings—indicates the process which connects the activities of thinking and links up its discoveries. But there is dialectic and dialectic: Hegel's is not Plato's, and Hamelin's not Hegel's. The dialectic of *Action*<sup>1</sup> is something new. It has a character *sui generis*, bound up, as we shall see, with the nature of the problem it helps to resolve. To make sure of having found the need for the supernatural, not merely in certain wills, but in the *inwardness of the will itself*, there is only one method to adopt: to start with the poorest good that can be willed; to show that this inevitably contains another; then that

<sup>1</sup> The expression contains an ambiguity, but it is one hardly worth resolving. The two meanings are equally precise, and may be understood as: (1) the dialectic of *Action* as it operates in Maurice Blondel's book; or (2) the dialectic of *action* as it operates in life. It is always the first of these meanings that we have directly in view.



this other itself contains a third; and so on till we come to something willed that includes in itself the ultimate need. This passing from will to will is the Dialectic.

There can be no question, here, of following the Dialectic stage by stage, as it operates in conjunction with metapsychological analysis. It would be an absurd undertaking to try to deal with the substance of a whole volume in a few pages. We shall have attained our purpose if we can give some idea of its method of procedure and its result.

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Looked at closely, there is no object of will, however limited, that does not prove to be too rich to meet the conditions we may impose on it, and leave no room for a desire poorer than itself. Whatever object one actually wills, there may still be some other less exacting; for every will, it would seem, can resolve itself into a not-willing. Simply to play and amuse oneself, take nothing seriously, seek the most varied experiences while being careful to choose none of them, toy with every pleasure only to quit it as soon as may be—is not this precisely the *absence* of will, and is not such an art of life the very definition of the dilettante's?

Let us examine, as an example, this elementary case in metapsychological analysis. Just as it is impossible to pretend to be rid of all theory, without showing you have one, namely the doing without a theory, so it is impossible to proclaim any complete detachment, without testifying, by that very fact, that you are attached to something—your own independence. Moreover, what is the meaning of a desire to exclude no experience, if it is not to exclude those which are themselves merely exclusive—the experience of virginity, for example?

Thus the theory, that by willing everything you succeed in willing nothing, is not merely illusory: it contains its own contradiction.

In assigning to this will, as we have done, a definite object, personal independence, we have undoubtedly recorded a significant fact of experience; but we are going too fast. In order to make certain, at the start, that no desire escapes us, we must now, after showing that each necessarily contains another, try to restrict one desire to the very minimum of what can be willed. Now what comes after *not willing anything* is *willing nothing*—willing nothingness. Not Dilletantism, now, but Pessimism.

Here is a good theme for metapsychological analysis: the behaviour of the world-weary individual who aspires to non-existence. One may have observed on occasion, at the end of a family party, when the daughter of the house, out of politeness to her parents, has been invited to play the piano, some old friend of the household may discreetly vanish. Would it be that he doesn't like music? Quite the contrary. It is *because* he likes it that he has run away from it. In the same way, he who of his own accord goes out from life, banging the door after him, merely testifies, as Schopenhauer remarked, to a love of life that disgusts him with the life he has.

*Being*, there is the first sound link of the chain, the first positive term that Dialectic discovers as the object of will. But this first result is still ambiguous: appearance, mere appearance, has being; in its way, it exists. The conditions of our undertaking compel us, then, to suppose a will that claims to be attached to appearances alone, which limits itself to phenomena. Can this last attitude be sincere?

No. Metapsychological analysis can similarly show that when Don Juan, in the course of his adventures, supposes he is always the taker, never the taken, he is the victim, fundamentally, of an authentic passion. It is the love of Love, which alone can give relish to its counterfeits. In the same way, the most radical phenomenalist cannot rely as he does on his phenomena without necessarily believing them solid, and *willing* them so. The universe of sensations has no consistence or coherence of itself; man cannot be at home in the shifting animal world: he needs *objects*, lastingly cut out from the sensible continuum. More than that: to lead his life as a man, he needs a *system* of objects, inter-related and ruled by laws. What does this mean? That is not just *any* universe, but precisely the universe of Science that action needs and the will of man ratifies. Therefore the man who *wills* phenomena, *wills* the Science that makes it possible to rely on them.

From this point the Dialectic goes on to traverse thought and life in their increasingly complex manifestations. To perceive the direction of its course we must proceed still more quickly and survey its route from a more commanding viewpoint.

Time was when we could believe that physical laws were purely and simply an impersonal interpretation of facts. Now, the criticism of these latter years (though when Maurice Blondel wrote *L'Action* it had scarcely begun) has shown that in the

formulation of laws there enter many arbitrary, or at least conventional elements, and that a whole department of science (and an important and essential department) has to do, not with the universe it was supposed to reflect, but with the constructive activity of science itself. The universe that is familiar to us—that is necessary to us—is the result of a collaboration between object and subject. Let us call 'mind' that liaison activity which accommodates the determinism it discovers, constrains it mathematically, actualizing and systematizing the potentialities of matter. Indeed the will, apparently so closely associated with phenomena, is unwittingly seeking and straining after *mind*.

Certainly it is a strange mode of activity, this of mind. By the very fact of its awareness of determinism and of its exploiting it, it testifies, somehow, to its own independence of it: there is no awareness of determinism without the idea of freedom.

We may now pretend that the will, which has discovered mind and freedom, desires these rich perfections only in proportion as it realizes them itself, and *in* itself. It is the attitude, in practice, of the egoist, and the theoretical position of Solipsism.

Metapsychological analysis shows that this attitude is untenable, and that anyone who believes himself to be adopting it is not in fact doing so. The man who is most in love with solitude, the veriest misanthrope, has the insuperable urge to associate with a being like himself: he cannot help wanting to love, wanting the companionship of another self.

Confronted with what it desires, unable to escape that desire even by dint of disavowing it, is it possible for the will at least to limit its willing, to confine it to a single object? Let it try! Friendship, however capable of being self-sufficient in practice, is still, in relation to the urge of the will, an incomplete form of love, a mere outline drawing of it; and the sketch, prized by the amateur for its own sake, has significance only in its relation to the picture.

*Love*, that is the object towards which the will is irresistibly drawn. Of that will to love, man carries the plan, like a law inscribed in the structure of his soul, in his very conformation; yet it is not repudiated or frustrated when he generously vows himself to solitude of heart and celibacy. Metapsychological analysis would indicate that in certain sacrifices there is a homage paid to the very thing that is forgone.

But once more, love is not all-sufficient for the will. What it seeks, transcending love, and despite its personal contradictions

and disappointments, is the *family*. The real ambition, at the root of the will in lovers, never asserts itself more strongly than when they shut out the whole universe and think to find sufficiency and satisfaction in being alone, becoming just one. For it is then they are three. The child arrives, whose existence, no doubt, depended solely on them, but whom they had no choice, just the same, but to will.

Have we reached, with the family, the final stage of this passing out (as it were) of the will from itself? We have not. There is no stopping. Remember Aristotle's dictum: ἀνάγκη μὴ στήναι. Like the ever widening ripples set up in deep water by a falling stone, the circle of the will is constantly extending, taking in realities ever richer and more inclusive. To will the family is to will that higher unity in which families shelter, where they may find the means to remain one in their plurality: and that is the *State*.

This in its turn is willed not only that it may procure for the family, through the existence of a political authority, the atmosphere of security it needs to breathe. The state has another purpose. Enclosed within frontiers, and assuming the name of *country*, it answers to a more unselfish aspiration, to a more ambitious will-to-be. The meaning, the very function of *countries*, is surely no less than to provide *Humanity*—which, without them, would be a mere abstraction—with the means to bring into existence, among the several groups of which its nature is composed (as white light is composed of the colours of the spectrum), the possibilities it contains, possibilities that cannot be realized simultaneously in any one. Think what would be lacking to the manifestations of the human Mind if it were compelled to develop, uniformly, every one of its potentialities, if it could not completely forgo any of them: or what value would be left to the capabilities of Man if there did not exist, dispersed amid climates that favour particular gifts, a people as chivalrous as the Spaniards, as musical as the Germans; a nation of poets like the Italians, of logicians like the French!

Humanity exists, in short, only by virtue of the *Whole* which contains it, and which in a sense it contains; it is the whole that receives from humanity its *raison d'être*, and gives it the medium it needs. It is precisely to this Whole, in its spiritual dimensions, that the will is forced to aspire, and it is the complete Whole that it ultimately ratifies.

Now at this point, when with the outermost ripple of the wave the furthest limit of what can be willed has been attained, when it would seem that the Dialectic can spread no further, actually the Will, though it has exhausted everything else, has not yet exhausted itself; it retains its own momentum, a force still unutilized. And more than that: when everything finite has been swallowed up in it, as it were in a yawning abyss, its capacity to will—and that is its essence—remains intact and still empty: for to have willed is nothing, I can go on willing indefinitely. It is this power, for ever transcending accomplishment, that gives rise in man to the idea of the infinite; it is this which, confronting that idea with its own emptiness, in some sort measures and fulfils it.

So the idea of the infinite, at the heart of the Dialectic, is obtained by no simple, no purely formal manipulation of the contrary idea; nor is it imported artificially into the content of knowledge. It is shown to be present, as *acting*—we shall see presently what this means—in the very sense of the finite. The latter is apprehended by the will as such—that is as transcendable—only because the desire of the will transcends it.

Now this idea of the infinite, in its positive implications (in that the infinite is none other than that which makes man superior to animal, the person to the thing), is also the idea out of which instinctive contemplation or deliberate reflection constructs the idea of God. Thus there is in everyone—no doubt not in a form discoverable by direct observation, but concealed in the dynamic urge of the will, together with a nameless desire to recognize divinity—the will, the *need*, that God should exist.<sup>1</sup>

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We must pause, here, to make a few observations.

The Blondelian dialectic of *Action* reveals a series of ends that the will cannot help desiring, and the whole series lies in the direction of God. The will, that has no choice, Blondel calls the 'willing Will' (*la volonté voulante*); but man has another will—that which we all know—whose function is to concur with the willing

<sup>1</sup> We are engaged, all the time, in unfolding simply the content of the Will. There is no question of passing from the need for God to his existence, by any new-fangled ontological argument. The Blondelian dialectic knows nothing of isolated 'realizations'. In a sense, but only in a sense (and one that is often misunderstood), it revives a phenomenalism. Its task is to pass along a chain, link by link, to the end. It has not to prove the soundness of each link as it comes to it. It is when the dialectic arrives at the point at which all 'hangs together' that the soundness of the whole chain is to be understood. The verification of existence depends on the whole.



Will, or oppose it, by means of a free act. This act represents our 'willed Will' (*volonté voulue*).

What is the duty of will (2) in relation to will (1)? Clearly the will must preserve an internal equilibrium. It cannot suppress, by its *free* will, the very will by which it is constituted; to oppose it, therefore, is an attempt at sheer self-destruction, an impossible suicide.<sup>1</sup>

Wherein consists, in practice, and for the individual, this duty of unification? For example, would he be bound to will for himself a family, on the ground that, being human, he can do no other-wise?

The only answer is: to avoid self-contradiction,

(1) The individual must not condemn any of the ends sought after by his willing will;

(2) When he explicitly adopts one of these ends he must never do so in such a way as to turn an intermediate into a final end;

(3) But though he would be held bound to will the ends in the order in which the Dialectic connects them, he is not bound to pass through each of them in practice. He may jump some of them, if he can do so without losing his direction. Celibacy is justified when it is not a deviation but a short cut.

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To resume our argument. We have discovered, in man, a will whose end is nothing but God. But such an end could not exist without revealing another—which it already contains. Meta-psychological analysis is in some measure by way of showing that to will God is already to desire to enter into relations with Him. And just as an idea or a feeling, even though psychologically it never expands in consciousness, and never assumes the vaguest form of an idea or a feeling, is nevertheless led by a kind of practical logic (*logique en acte*)<sup>2</sup>—like that which draws the oak from the acorn—to translate itself into appropriate conduct, so the obscure feeling of divinity comes to find infallible expression in a generally religious *behaviour*. It is a scientific fact that wherever there is human *ground* there springs up spontaneously a harvest of

<sup>1</sup> From the Christian point of view, and in relation to dogma, one might add that for the will to decline to effect this equilibrium is to risk ultimately seeing its internal division perpetuated in conditions which would make it one of the torments of the damned.

<sup>2</sup> There are several instances of this practical logic to be seen in our introduction to the work of H. Lubienska de Lenval: *L'Education du Sentiment religieux* (Spec, pp. 14 sqq.)

religions. The evidence of rationalism, which notes the fact of these irresistible crops, can stand; it represents the virtually universal reaction of thought; it is its metapsychological explanation: a religion is superstitious where it can be seen to be the projection—the natural fruit, as it were—of Desire; the need which calls it forth is the very explanation that deprives it of value.

On the strength of this judgement and this comment, rationalism supposes it has discredited all religion. But it has counted without the Dialectic. It is true, as the latter agrees, that man inevitably wills to enter into communication with God; and if at the same time it is true, as rationalism claims, that every human attempt to this end is to be condemned from the outset as magical, superstitious and idolatrous, it remains for philosophy to seek a solution of this dilemma. After proclaiming this check to the will, it cannot leave it at that, and be content simply to explain why this check exists. It must also attempt to determine the conditions required in order that there should *not* be such a check. In other words, it is incumbent on philosophy to examine the characteristics that ought to be found in an authentic religion; and to ask: 'If it is necessary to have *some* religion, what are the conditions it would have to fulfil?' That is the point to which philosophy must go, if it is to avoid the charge of unwarrantably shirking a problem that it has raised itself.<sup>1</sup> It has no means of evading the obligation: the Dialectic has it cornered.

That is the whole point. And here was Maurice Blondel's chief endeavour, his outstanding contribution to philosophy; it was his attempt to annex to it, by some means, a field of study that had been hitherto barred. His endeavour succeeded—or, at any rate, the question has been definitively posed to philosophical reasoning.

Just as Kant once bade philosophers 'suspend operations until further orders', and make up their minds on the conditions he imposed as to the possibility of a metaphysic, so Blondel, with equal boldness and more justification, forbade philosophy to believe it could unreservedly suffice for its own special problems: it has either strayed from its course or stopped short of its limits, if it fails to emerge at last in the field of religion.

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<sup>1</sup> For a long time, at any rate in France, it would seem that we have had a problem beyond the resources of philosophy, transcending the whole field of secular speculation. But that is wrongly to restrict the reason's jurisdiction. The reason is competent to determine the conditions of a being's possibility, even that of a being whose reality it is incapable of proving or verifying.

What now, according to Maurice Blondel, is philosophy's answer to his question?

Broadly, the essence of it is this : that there could be no religion acceptable to reason except that which had God Himself for its promoter. Uninvited, it is impossible to approach Him ; impossible to gain Him by one's own efforts ; He must give Himself before we can possess Him : *a religion cannot be authentic unless its origin is supernatural.*

But in giving this answer philosophy has not said all that there is to be said, nor satisfied all one has a right to ask of it. No doubt, if some supernatural intervention has to take place, that intervention has sovereign freedom to choose its own mode of activity ; but that does not prevent philosophy's seeking to determine *a priori* the particular mode which the very nature of things imposes as a law on the author of Nature. It is thus, according to Blondel, that it is in a fair way to reveal, in the hypothetical religion of which it is studying the conditions, the necessity of dogmas and formulated observance.

When, in *L'Action*, Maurice Blondel drives philosophy to conclusions so advanced as these, he is clearly inspired by what he finds realized in his own Faith. But what right has anyone to complain of this, if he has asked of experience nothing but the subject-matter of philosophy? Is the geometrician to be reproached for knowing in advance, by observation or guess-work, what will be the result of his theorem? And is the obtaining of such a result any the less *a priori* because it was known from the first by means of ruler and compass? It is merely the quality of the reasoning that counts ; all that matters is that philosophy should proceed by a method that is strictly philosophical. Besides, however far it ventures, we must never forget that its conclusions are still, so to speak, in the air. The questions are hypothetical, and so are the answers. Philosophy has no right, after considering *a priori* the properties necessary or appropriate to an authentic religion, to decide that any such religion exists.

But where philosophy stops, it is for the philosopher to proceed further. When the Dialectic reaches the end of its course, it has not by any means exhausted its momentum ; when it has brought man to the very edge of the supernatural, and can itself go no further—it invites *him* to take the plunge.

Here is something we have still to consider.

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The question is this. How can man, alone with his free will, remain faithful to the course of his *fundamental* will? In actual space and time, it is by resolving to examine the one Religion he is confronted with, in the light of the conditions he *requires* of a religion; and since this religion—the Christian religion—imposes conditions of honesty and humility, without which (as it claims) no one can begin to understand it truly, he must needs conform to these conditions, just as he would conform to those of any experiment he wished to succeed.

How could the philosopher decline such a challenge? Those inner partitions, temporary partitions of method, must come down: at the dialectical point we have reached, the time has come to be in the fullest sense a *man*, a being who must not only seek to know his destiny, but to accomplish it: in order to accomplish it, he must seek it; and in the very act of seeking, achieve it.

What certitudes are reached when, to make trial of the only way open to us, we have humbly agreed to take it, as Pascal required, by means of that stern discipline which holds the promise of the light?<sup>1</sup> No one can speak except for himself, after making the trial. And Maurice Blondel knew well he was merely speaking for himself when, before his examiners in the hall of the Sorbonne, he made bold to give a testimony that none demanded of him, which could not but be regarded, at that time and place, as surprisingly provocative. He concluded his thesis with the following act of faith:

It is for philosophy to prove the impossibility, in practice, of not deciding definitely for or against the supernatural: 'Does it exist, or not?' It is for philosophy, too, to consider the consequences of both answers, and to measure their vast divergence. It may not go further and declare, on its own authority, that it does in fact exist, or that it does not. But if I may be allowed to add one word, just one, which transcends the realm of human knowledge and the competence of philosophy, the one word, in view of Christianity, which can best express something of that certitude which cannot be imparted because it springs from the intimacy of a purely personal act, the word which may be itself an act; I must declare: 'It exists.'

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One final objection. Would it not be possible to abbreviate the Dialectic and arrive at the same result?

Suppose the existence of God be granted, as established by

<sup>1</sup> *Pensées de Pascal*, Petite édition Brunschwig, p. 441.

reason: why not, it may be asked, start from there? It would then be merely a matter of showing that one cannot know God without wishing to enter into communication with Him; and so one would reach the penultimate stage of the Dialectic without having to go through all that led up to it. But that is impossible. For one thing, the only way of guarding against the possibility of being betrayed by some particular will—always ready to repudiate this desire, or that, as not its own—to be able to show that the will for God is contained in another, and that this in turn is contained in a third, and so on till we reach a will that can go back no further, because—beyond nothingness, considered as something still capable of being willed—there is no room left even for the illusion of an object. For another thing, no will, whatever it may be, can be directly connected with a cognition, as though it were *contained* in it, still less *demand*ed by it. In other words, the relation between willing and knowing is necessarily synthetic. But what we need is a relation that is analytic—from the thing contained to that which contains it—such as that which may exist between one will and another; for the whole intention of Blondel's research is to confront the will, not with what it *ought to will*, but what *what in fact it does*.

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To conclude. It is for a more detailed study than this, for one less purely 'introductory', to say whether at any point the curve of the Dialectic has been artificially strained or tampered with. What should emerge from our account of it—in the most favourable view (which is ours)—is that the double task, undertaken by the author of *L'Action*, has been fully accomplished:

It had to be shown that the supernatural is no superfluity, no optional luxury, that a man may forgo without incurring the least blame. The Dialectic has contrived to prove that the supernatural responds to a need, to an appeal, to a positive demand.

Besides this, and at the same time, confirmation had to be given to the transcendental character of the supernatural, which ensures that even the mere need for it could not be a purely natural need. This is the subtlest point, and it is concerning this that controversies, still unsettled, have raged from the outset. It would be well, therefore, to consider it closely.

What is required to safeguard the transcendence of the supernatural? This: that in the very heart of nature itself there should operate some force which does not derive from it, and that it should be none other than God, who of His own motion pro-



claims Himself within us, by the need He opens out and by the aspiration He excites. Is it possible to fix the precise point, in the course of the Dialectic, at which this secret intervention, demanded by theology, makes itself felt?

No doubt we must say that the grace that works unperceived in every soul, even the most unphilosophical, the most ignorant or profligate, is operating from the outset to give the will that momentum which sustains it and carries it on. In point of fact, there would be something artificial, surely, in supposing that this movement, in spite of the end to which it is directed, suffices only up to a certain point of time, after which it is relayed by some extraneous force, like those rockets which at the end of their flight receive fresh impetus by the firing of a new charge. Among the actual data presented to metapsychological analysis, there is always one that is in some sort privileged, where the grace we speak of intervenes most effectually. It is when, in the behaviour of man, who (spiritually, at any rate, and under forms that are capable of providing him with the means) makes for himself gods, or a God, with whom to communicate, we come to see an enterprise of magic, necessarily illusory and superstitious. Why, in fact, should the enterprise be condemned, just when it is about to give man that which he seems to need, if not precisely for the reason that man's true need transcends all that it is possible for man to give himself, because it is *in* him without being entirely or uniquely *of* him, because it is of another, and supernatural, order?

Thus the investigation at last attains the end originally proposed. To reveal its plan, we have had to follow Blondel's thought, not as we accompany a traveller throughout his journey, but as one's finger traces his route on the map. We have had to confine our attention more precisely to the ideological scenery on the way, and we have had no time to collect, as we went, the innumerable nuggets embedded in the soil.

Besides, what we have been keeping in view has not been the doctrine of *L'Action* in all its complexity, but what is really its skeleton. It would be absurd to hold that a man's skeleton is his complete body. But what painter could properly depict a man's figure without taking into account the shape of his skeleton? So there is no reason to complain if, in outlining a philosophy like Blondel's—making, as it were, a mere pencil-sketch of its anatomy—we have been compelled by the nature of our subject to select: first the problem it sprang from, and then the thesis, its soul.

## DR. ANGELO CRESPI

By MAURICE NEDONCELLE

I OWE the invaluable friendship of Angelo Crespi to the study of Baron von Hügel. Twenty years ago, as I collected materials for a book on the Baron, I went through some Italian periodicals, the columns of which raged with controversy on Transcendence and Immanence. The articles were signed by Crespi and Murri. These two men followed opposite paths. The first one sided with von Hügel against the immanent God of a not very high pantheism, which was then the prevailing idol of philosophers. The second one, Murri, deliberately abandoned the old transcendent God as an obsolete and illusory myth; he converted the Christian faith into some emotional humanism. Now, there was nothing specially noticeable in the position itself of Dr. Crespi, except for the history of the Modernist movement in Italy. But what struck me most was the manner in which he defended his thesis against his opponent. He was not anti-modern or academical; he did not want to take us back to some special philosophical school of the past. He spoke out of mere personal conviction. His strength was in himself, in his subtle philosophical reasoning and, still deeper, in his religious thirst for the presence of a living God.

Then I met him in London. His first question was not on God, but on the Gospels. He was very keen on the eschatological problem, *parousia*, Loisy and so on. I was baffled and my answer was probably very unsatisfactory and disappointing, as far as I can remember. Nevertheless, we kept on, and quickly became friends. Exegesis was not exactly in my line, and I could not bring him fresh information or original views. . . . But I observed a gradual change of emphasis in his thoughts. Exegesis tempted him less and less, philosophy and prayer absorbed him more and more. He never 'minimized' the importance of Biblical criticism and, on that score, he did not burn in his last years what he had worshipped in his youth. Perhaps some of his views on the subject were bold; he knew they would appear so, and he could not help it. But the Encyclical Letter of Pope Pius XII on Biblical studies, and the general trend of Catholic research work in late years, comforted him. Moreover, he realized that, on the whole, the scientific quest for the historical Jesus did not threaten but support the beliefs of Catholic souls; no doubt, higher criticism proves less revolutionary now than in the beginning of this century.

His true vocation was for religious philosophy. He was very fond of

neat reasoning and proceeded according to classical rules, without undue speed or needless obscurity. But, classical in form, he was independent in thought. He was absolutely devoted to truth, and absolutely not to fashion. He did not care for the lions of the day, and did not compromise to get an easy audience. He followed his path and chose his friends in any school. He loved Dante and St. Bernard: how often and warmly he quoted them, how bright his comment was. But he was not prevented from doing justice to many others. He discovered gems of value in Spinoza himself or in Matthew Arnold or Nettleship. . . . Out of them all, he brought forth some elements of his own splendid synthesis in praise of Almighty God.

His published works are historical or polemical: his well-known *History of Contemporary Italian Philosophy* is avowedly directed against Croce and Gentile. His pamphlet *From Ethics to Religion* is a vindication of Christian Providence against Nikolai Hartmann's philosophy of value. But the positive side of his contribution to philosophy will appear soon: he had just finished correcting the proofs of an important book, *From the Self to God*, when he died so unexpectedly. Starting from a reflection upon facts, as phenomenology does, he thinks that we acquire self-consciousness and get our first spiritual insights from a structural situation in the very first years of our lives, when we feel surrounded by our mother's presence and kindness. Thus, the ego is never an isolated and disincarnate element; it is always connected with some 'Otherness' in an objective world. And God is given to us through some mediating agencies. We could not prove Him to be if we did not first believe in Him, however dimly, and benefit from His overwhelming presence in the surrounding world.

Sometimes, Dr. Crespi seems to walk backwards from Hegel to Kant, and his way to God becomes mainly ethical. But his true method is not so narrow and steep as Kant's. It is a very suggestive and original variation on the old theme *ab exterioribus ad interiora, ab interioribus ad superiora*. But the motto is deprived by him of its neo-platonic bias and supplied with a cosmic wisdom, if I may speak so, pre-established by the Creator to be understood by man. The intimations of soul by God through Nature prepare for God's intimations of an Eternal world through the story of the soul and the history of mankind. Such philosophy is mystical: we find in it patches of Heaven seen through the clouds of earth, and gracious anticipations of eternity given in transitory events. But Professor Crespi's mysticism is compensated by a deep sense of history and a critical exercise of reflection. From his complex method, we can guess he remained faithful to his friend and master, Baron von Hügel. But the substantial bulk of his thoughts comes from his personal meditations. His outlook is sometimes not very far from Professor John Baillie's, but he adds new and very valuable matter, especially on the beginnings of spiritual consciousness and the

relation of time to eternity; and his historical background is more systematic.

Life is tragic, interrupted before completion. The best part of Angelo Crespi's message is silent. He did not live to print his ultimate thoughts. But the prospect of such trials and apparent failure could not shake his spiritual peace: he knew that our temporal being is too great not to be merged into Eternity. It is the very presence of a spiritual vocation in man that requires some death and resurrection of the flesh. Souls, like flowers, are to be plucked; but God's hands pluck them and their sudden severance preludes eternal blossoming. Angelo Crespi lived in this faith: such was the origin of his courage, loyalty, sensitiveness. He was ready to depart, but unable to abandon us. Space and time were not devils for him as they were for William Blake, because he knew they were already permeated by eternity and could not stop God's love, nor friend's love. He was utterly Catholic in the ecclesiological sense of the word, devoted to his Church and to the Sacraments. But his Catholicism quite spontaneously expanded to the most distant boundaries of Creation. He could not be kept in an intellectual jail or in a spiritual ghetto, because all roads and fields and woods led him to the same central Incarnate Lord.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE RELIGIONS OF MANKIND

*The Origins and History of Religions.* By John Murphy, D.D., D.Litt.  
(Manchester University Press. 25s.)

THE aim of this book is to present to the public an account of the religions of mankind which will inform them of the distinctive features and principal doctrines of each, and take account of the latest results of research in prehistory and comparative religion. By and large, Dr. Murphy is successful. His account of the great world religions, as also of what archaeology has revealed of earlier religion, gives the general reader reliable information and with the right amount of detail, sufficient but not so much as to overload the canvas. Christianity has been omitted, and since Our Lord is referred to as 'a remarkable religious genius', we are glad of the omission. On the other hand the author is not among those who try to explain religion away as a man-made illusion. He believes in an ethical monotheism and, one gathers, in Christ as the supreme teacher of religious truth.

Dr. Murphy is also to be congratulated on relating religion to states of human culture, Primitive, Civilized, 'the agricultural and urban societies of the early valley states', and the more advanced civilizations which produced from the Nile to China what he calls the Prophetic horizon represented by such figures as the Jewish prophets, the Greek philosophers and the first teachers of Hindu mysticism.

Our serious complaint against Dr. Murphy is his exaggerated evolutionism. He seems to believe that man's soul as well as his body has evolved from an animal ancestry, though a soul intermediate between the rational soul or form of a beast and man's rational and immortal spirit is inconceivable, an impossibility such as not God Himself could produce. And he speaks as though man's reason were somehow a product of its indispensable instruments, prehensile hand, complicated brain. Granted that such bodily organs were the indispensable condition for the creation of a rational soul, they could not have produced it.

Under the influence of this evolutionism, Dr. Murphy rejects Dr. Schmidt's view that the most primitive religion was an ethical monotheism, other forms of religion subsequent perversions.



As regards the earliest men, we cannot agree either with Schmidt or his opponent. Since man first appeared on earth some 500,000 years ago, neither the religion of the most primitive existing peoples, nor what can be gathered from their remains as to the religion of the later Palaeolithic cultures which, by comparison with the vast remoteness of the earliest men known are but of yesterday or the day before, can give us any information as to the religion of the first men. For sheer lack of evidence prehistory cannot tell us what religious beliefs they held or if they held any at all.

Nor do we know what reply Dr. Schmidt and his followers would make to Dr. Murphy's assertion that it has been proved that the pygmy peoples scattered here and there over a wide area do not belong to one primitive race, but are independent racial formations which have degenerated from neighbouring stocks of normal stature and of whose culture their own is an impoverishment, and their simpler religion a corresponding simplification. But he cannot be said to present Dr. Schmidt's case fairly. He subscribes to Dr. Marett's view that the most primitive religion was that of Mana, the awareness of some indefinite and mysterious power in things, in certain objects in particular, too vague to be regarded as a spirit, still less as a god. From this sense and cult of Mana sprang later animisms, polytheism and ultimately monotheism. Unfortunately the facts do not bear out this evolutionary scheme. Dr. Murphy admits that Mana is also thought of as life and even as will. But a being which lives and wills is a spirit. Nor does he present the facts fairly as to the worship of a High God. We hear of the Mana religion of the Australian aborigines, but we do not hear of the High God, Duramulun. We are told that the natives of Tierra del Fuego are on the same low cultural level as the mesolithic food-gatherers of the kitchenmidden culture. We are not told of Dr. Kopper's investigation of the religion of the Yamata in that island—he was even initiated into the tribe—which he found to be an ethical monotheism of a high type, so that in fact these despised Fuegians are or were, for unhappily they are verging on extinction, on a far higher level than the millions of contemporary European secularists. The development of Indian religion is traced from a primitive naturism and animism to the sublime metaphysics and mysticism of the Vedantic schools. But nothing is said of the simple but elevated monotheism of the Bhils, one of the most primitive cultures surviving on the subcontinent. We would not imply that we are wholly convinced by Dr. Schmidt and his disciples. We find it difficult to believe that animism, Mana and totemism are later degenerations of a primitive monotheism. But the evidence tends to show that monotheism, that is belief in a supreme High God, maker and ruler of the world, is equally primitive. Both sides in this controversy seem to assume that these beliefs are or at least originally were mutually exclusive. This we venture to submit is not the case. It is quite possible to

believe in a sovereign and a moral Father God but also in Mana, somewhat as Catholics believe both in God and sanctifying grace, and in sacramental rites which convey it, in subordinate deities, even in guardian animal spirits, a cultus, we may add, that Christopher Dawson and some others regard as the source, not, like Dr. Murphy, the product of totemism. That is to say whereas the disciple of Dr. Schmidt maintains that belief A has degenerated from belief B, his opponent that belief B has evolved from belief A, we would suggest that both may well have co-existed even from the dawn of human religion, had we scientific evidence for it. The facts, even as stated here by Dr. Murphy, though far more strongly, when his regrettable omissions are made good, seem to us to favour this view, particularly the co-existence among several tribes of Australian aborigines of a Mana cult and belief in a High God, maker of the world and man and, moreover, a moral ruler. In our opinion neither the evolution of Drs. Marett and Murphy, nor the degeneration of Dr. Schmidt is the password of comparative religion, but co-existence.

E. I. WATKIN

## DANTE

*Dante the Philosopher.* By Etienne Gilson. (Sheed and Ward. 15s.)  
*Dante, The Divine Comedy. I: Hell.* Translated by Dorothy L. Sayers.  
 (Penguin Classics. 2s. 6d.)

PROFESSOR ETIENNE GILSON is perhaps the greatest living authority on the history of Christian and mediaeval philosophy, and that makes what he has to say about Dante of lasting significance. Yet at first glance *Dante the Philosopher* is rather disappointing. The early part of it is devoted to refuting a work of secondary importance which is almost unknown in England—*Dante le Théologien* by Père Mandonnet, O.P.

Père Mandonnet was a very distinguished Thomist of the Fribourg school, but unfortunately when he turned his attention to Dante he was captured by the excitement of developing a simple and super-logical thesis that explained everything. That is a pitfall in Dante studies that can only be compared to Baconian and other theories in Shakespeare studies. For Mandonnet the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divina Commedia* formed an elaborate allegory concealing all sorts of information about Dante's personal life. The Mandonnet thesis bore many marks of 'professional deformation'. The allegory of Beatrice really told the story of Dante's vocation to the priesthood. The poet was a 'spoiled priest' but later amended his ways and joined the Third Order of St. Dominic. Mandonnet made Dante's theology as orthodox and Thomist as his own.

Gilson has no difficulty in disposing of the more fanciful side of

Mandonnet's logic. But the value of his book does not lie in that. We get an impression that Mandonnet was really no more than the initial spark that fired him off. Gilson was then led on to examine the whole of Dante's thought in the light of his vast knowledge of the Middle Ages. Gilson's final conclusion was almost the exact opposite of Mandonnet's. As Gilson sees things Dante was anything but a true follower of St. Thomas. Dante's philosophical and political theory split mediaeval Christendom into two camps and 'completely shattered the unity of Christian wisdom, the unifying principle and trend of Christendom'.

If we want to grasp Gilson's point we would do well to begin examining it on the political plane. Dante belonged to the Florentine party of the White Guelfs and he had a bitter experience of the policy of Pope Benedict VIII. He came to think that the only political salvation for Florence and for Italy lay in the restoration of the full dignity and power of the Holy Roman Empire. Theories about the Empire ran as an undercurrent through mediaeval thinking and took on many different forms both before Dante and after him. In nearly all these theories the Holy Roman Emperor appears as the legitimate heir of the Roman Caesars who brought the Pax Romana to the world. But Dante's love of theory drove him further than this. He saw the Empire, not as it had ever existed historically, but in relation to the ideal life of man on earth. Christendom had thus not one but two sovereign authorities, each supreme in his sphere—the Pope and the Emperor. In its proper sphere—that of temporal affairs—the Emperor's authority was subject to the will of God alone.

The background of all this, of course, is the great quarrel between the Papacy and the Empire from which the Popes finally emerged victorious, though at enormous cost. To see something of the climate of the dispute we only need to compare Dante's *De Monarchia* with St. Thomas's *De Regimine*. St. Thomas, Gilson says, considered that the Papacy was the supreme authority in Christendom even, at last resort, in things temporal. His letters to sovereigns of his time make no reference whatever to the existence of a temporal authority standing above them in the sense of a sacred Emperor. To Dante such an omission would appear intolerable, for the whole argument of the *De Monarchia* consists in justifying the Imperial office as providential and divinely established. Furthermore, says Gilson, whereas according to St. Thomas man has only one final end, the Beatific Vision, Dante jockeyed himself into affirming the existence of two final ends, one corresponding to the function of the Papacy, the other to that of the Empire. This conception of the two ends of man is important as a key to the humanist-and-theological synthesis Dante tried to build. Man's natural end is reached through the study of the philosophers, Aristotle and indeed Vergil are masters who can lead us to it. The establishment of the universal authority of the Emperor and of universal peace goes

hand in hand with the type of natural contemplation achieved by the Greeks and Romans. Man's supernatural final end, the Beatific Vision, must be reached through spiritual teachings and the practice of the theological virtues.

In his *exposé* Gilson is up against the great difficulty that has always baffled Dante critics and made it impossible to write a definitive book about what Dante thought. As soon as one starts emphasizing a particular aspect of that immense and universal writer one is forced to neglect another. In this instance I cannot help feeling that Dante's poetry and human character has in some measure been jettisoned. Dante was primarily a poet, not a systematic philosopher, and Gilson's systematic mind tends, I think, to draw Dante's statements to conclusions of too rigorous a character. It is a question of emphasis. The philosophical and political arguments in Dante's prose works always give me an impression of uneasiness. It is as though the poet is using a language and a mode of expression that is not entirely natural to him. The man of passion, the pamphleteer, constantly appears beneath the clothing of abstract reasoning, and the clearest and most visual of all writers becomes entangled in petty points. I do not want to overstress this view, and I hope I am not being unjust to Professor Gilson's argument. The fact remains that Dante was quite incapable of the serene and objective manipulation of argument that is characteristic of the style of St. Thomas Aquinas; he was at his worst as a writer when he was trying to evolve original political or philosophical theories of his own, and at his best when he was building up the *philosophia perennis* into a great poetic vision.

Every critic has his own ideas on how Dante should be translated, and discussions about the details of any single translation of the *Divine Comedy* could fill volumes. I must confess that I was rather apprehensive when I heard Miss Dorothy Sayers was translating the great poem; partly because I do not feel that other versions of the classics in the same series have quite succeeded, partly because I could never endure Lord Peter Wimsey. But this *terza rima* version of Hell seems to me a very distinguished piece of work. Miss Sayers has a suitably terse style and she has racked the English language for her vocabulary. She avoids the intolerable 'o'ers' and 'e'ers' of the near-Victorian translators, yet steers clear of film slang and aggressive colloquialisms. She coins words, or uses unfamiliar ones, boldly—but then so did Dante: thus we get 'Almayn' for 'Alemagna', for instance, 'Bowges' for the 'Bolgi', or 'Belzecue' for 'Malacoda'. Of course many of the difficulties of language are insuperable. 'In my own beautiful St. John' is a perfectly literal translation of *nel mio bel San Giovanni*, but has lost the haunting note of the exile's longing for his native city. Sometimes Miss Sayers departs from the precise wording of Dante, as with:

'Three times round she went in a roaring smother'

for

*Tre volte il fe' girar con tutte l'acque*

or

'And over our heads the hollow seas closed up'

for

*Infin che il mar fu sopra noi richiuso*

(both these examples taken from the shipwreck in the Ulysses episode), but her wording is readable. I have come across no merely sloppy lines—in fact she is better at rendering the harsh Dante than the tender Dante. But on occasion her lines are weak. Surely the colloquial 'my little speech' (in the same Ulysses episode) will not do for *con questa orazion picciola*—*picciola* is small or little all right, but *orazion* is more than an after-dinner speech, it is an exhortation. Yet I am not sure that such criticisms are really fair, for sacrifices have to be made to preserve the rough and granitic verse form. Miss Sayers sometimes shows great skill in coping with Dante's onomatopoeia. Her rendering of the description of the sea of ice in the pit of hell is a good example:

if Pietrapan or Tambernic

Had crashed full weight on it, the very rim  
would not have given so much as even a creak.

The notes and comments and the introduction are instances of sensible learning. Miss Sayers has a remarkable power of managing detail, and her explanations are really clear and really explain.

BERNARD WALL

### WILLIAM MORRIS

*William Morris: Prophet of England's New Order.* By Lloyd Eric Grey.  
(Cassell & Co. 15s.)

WILLIAM MORRIS, *laudator temporis acti*, became a Revolutionary Socialist because of his sympathy for good workmen who could not live the good life, but he saw very well the danger that Socialism might complete the work of Capitalism.

Morris would not listen to Carlyle's call for an industrial Cromwell or an industrial Frederick the Great, banked by an aristocracy of labour. He had no liking for Matthew Arnold's plea, made after a study of education methods in Prussia, that only 'State action' could heal the ills of society. He feared that Hyndman's followers would attain, at the best, 'a sort of Bismarkian State Socialism, or as near to it as they can get in England'. Under Victorian Capitalism Morris already observed 'the danger of the community falling into bureaucracy' with its accompanying 'multiplication of boards and offices'; and he forcibly declared that 'individual men cannot shuffle off the business



of life on to the shoulders of an abstraction called the State, but must deal with it in conscious association with each other'. Yet William Morris of Kelmscott, rather than William Morris of Cowley, called himself a Socialist and is accepted now as a Socialist pioneer in a world where the conveyor-belt and the State Planning Board represent the coming of industrial democracy.

The description by Mr. Lloyd Fric Grey of his subject as the 'Prophet of England's New Order' gives a first impression that he regards the Socialism of William Morris as having been realized at last. Some odd mistakes in the first chapters (such as 'the Mansion' for the Mansion House and 'Cannon' for Cannon Street) make one wonder whether an American scholar is quite sure of his English ground. But such doubts soon vanish. Mr. Grey is sure of his facts and of his atmosphere in tracing the development of William Morris towards the period of Socialist activity, which is the most detailed portion of the book. Jane Morris, Rossetti and Burne-Jones are only lightly sketched. Pre-Raphaelite theories hardly figure here. The development of Morris in the fields of literature and the practical arts is much more fully explored to show what manner of man he was in thought and action—and no Englishman more than Morris *did* what he thought. There is a clear thread running through the book, from the young man who writes, 'I can't enter into politico-economic subjects, for on the whole I see that things are in a muddle, and I have no power or vocation to set them right', to the mature and many-sided craftsman who saw that the evil was the destruction of the dignity of man as a free and creative being, and would spare himself nothing if he could change the face of English life.

Only the strongest practical sense that good might come of it could have persuaded the middle-aged William Morris to throw himself into the acrid troubles (and to endure the financial drain) of the Democratic Federation and the Social Democratic Federation; to persevere through the Socialist League and the Hammersmith Socialist Society, to lecture frequently and to edit small papers, to court arrest and imprisonment ('I rather expect to learn one more craft—oakum-picking to wit'), when there were few around him who understood or accepted his doctrine. This was more magnificent than the enthusiasm of youth. Mr. Grey tells the story extremely well, making the period appear what it was, a critical point of change in the history of this country, filled with intelligent reformers, some of them violent, and with strange new doctrines, some of them vicious. Morris shone in this galaxy of Socialists, Anarchists and Communists, for he put his revolutionary faith in the goodness of the people and for a man of explosive temper he showed unending magnanimity towards his fraternal opponents. It was not for him then, or for many of his contemporaries, to understand the new evil that had come upon the world.

The long list of panaceas rejected by Morris does indeed raise the question how he should be classified politically. He called himself a Communist and a Practical Socialist, but at various times he disagreed with the theories of Christian Socialism, Marxian Scientific Socialism, State Socialism, Land Nationalization, Trade Unionism, Fabianism and Reform through Parliament. In economic life he thought that the multiplication of machinery led only to more machinery (a reflection on William Morris of Cowley); so in political life he came to regard radical clubs and reform societies as merely so much more political machinery, which continued to multiply, carrying into political life an ultra-modern complexity of technique and thereby distorting artistic and social development. When Morris reviewed Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, which was the blue-print for intellectuals in the eighteen-nineties, the 'brave new world' that was to come in a century's time, he saw through twentieth-century Socialism as clearly as he had seen through nineteenth-century Capitalism—and he found them very much the same thing.

Morris writes that 'the economical semi-fatalism of some Socialists is a deadening and discouraging view'; 'Bellamy is perfectly satisfied with modern civilization if only the injustice, misery and waste could be got rid of—which half-change seems quite possible to him'; 'the impression he produces is that of a huge standing army, tightly drilled, compelled by some mysterious fate to unceasing anxiety for the production of wares to satisfy every caprice, however wasteful and absurd, that may be cast among them'. Morris points out that if you remove the element of personal interest and substitute merely a public interest that operates through bureaucracies, 'you don't get happiness for everybody, you get inefficiency and graft'; and he remarks that Bellamy, having established the supremacy of lazy virtue, 'worries himself with obvious failure' over the matter of finding an incentive to make men work. All this in 1889! The next year Morris wrote *News from Nowhere* as an answer to Bellamy. A more complete reversal of the progressive spirit of the age could hardly be imagined.

In what school of thought, then, should William Morris be placed? Mr. Grey, having painstakingly examined Morris's development, concludes that *Looking Backward* had a pronounced effect in turning Morris away from all doctrines envisaging a higher degree of State Centralization. He hated those forces which tended towards the mechanization of either human or material 'units' of society. In healthy lesser arts—and therefore in sensible ordinary people, what we may call Common Law people—he saw the foundation of all great art and the foundation of a healthy instead of an unhealthy civilization. In the social organism he stood for Decentralization and for the natural equality of free men, with the maintenance of that individuality which creates self-respect in both personal and public obligations. If machines

were in danger of enslaving men, he would make an act of the will and put machinery in its due place. 'He became,' writes Mr. Grey, 'in a very real sense, the forerunner of the Distributist school of thought of post-war times. There was a large element of truth and insight in Gilbert K. Chesterton's words when he said: "Modern England will never exhaust her debt to William Morris. He was a very great Distributist. There seems to be a curious idea prevalent that he was a Socialist. Indeed, it was so prevalent that he was partly deceived by it himself".'

In reading this passage one must observe the careful reservation made by Mr. Grey that Morris was a forerunner of the Distributists. One must also discount a certain exaggeration on the part of Chesterton. Certain it is that the two men, Morris and Chesterton, stood in the same tradition of thought, and as this book shows they were uncannily similar in their lives—in their bigness of body and soul, in their Englishry, in the intention of their art and poetry, in their travels (though Morris went by choice to the periphery and Chesterton to the heart of our civilization) and even in their political crusades, for the vicissitudes of the Socialist League were strangely like the vicissitudes of the Distributist League. If they had lived in the same generation the Chesterbelloc would have been a threesome. We have seen that Morris found too close a similarity between Capitalism and Socialism. It was the tragedy of his time that anyone who revolted against Capitalism had to associate with the contemporary form of revolt; and as that was an attack upon property itself, instead of a demand for its equitable distribution, an essential principle of Distributism was never accepted by William Morris.

It was again in the tragedy of his time that Morris associated Christianity with the evils of privilege, so that while in Chesterton's phrase, 'he was the first of the Aesthetes to smell mediaevalism as a smell of the morning; and not as a mere scent of decay', he called the mediaeval communities good *only* because they were small and free and therefore blossoming with beauty; in the same spirit for him as the Hellenic or the Scandinavian communities of other periods.<sup>1</sup> Yet he was the great arch between Cobbett and Chesterton. More sensibly than any of his contemporaries—Ruskin, Carlyle or Matthew Arnold—he kept alive a criticism of the values of the new industrial order against the triumphant Victorian progressives; and there was much of the spirit of Chesterton in his dreams of a newer England:

There merry men went bedward when their tide of toil was done,

<sup>1</sup> A paper written by Chesterton in his youth, when he was pondering the claims of Christianity and of Socialism, remarks that William Morris, in *News from Nowhere*, 'gives a beautiful picture of a land ruled by Love, and rightly grounds the give-and-take camaraderie of his ideal state upon an assumed improvement in human nature. But he does not tell us how such an improvement is to be effected, and Christ did. (Maisie Ward, *Gilbert Keith Chesterton*, p. 74.)

And glad was the dawn's awakening, and the noon-tide fair and glad;

There no great store had the Franklin, and enough the hireling had . . .

ANDREW FORBES

### GEORGE III AND LORD NORTH

*George III, Lord North and the People, 1779-80.* By H. Butterfield. (G. Bell & Sons. 30s.)

THE Professor of Modern History in the University of Cambridge has chosen a critical period in English history for a closely documented and detailed study intended for students and specialists. During those two years England was very near revolution and, unlike the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, it would have been a real one, anticipating all that came to pass in 1832. The detailed exposition falls under three main heads: the Parliamentary scene and George III's desperate struggle to keep his creature, Lord North, in office; the crisis in Anglo-Irish relations consequent on the Irish Volunteer Movement; and, thirdly, the events designated comprehensively as 'The Intervention of the People', i.e. the stirrings in Yorkshire and in Middlesex, the Westminster Committee, the petitions, the loud demands for economy, reform and popular representation. The whole work is chronological, objective and minute, and the story is made to tell itself by copious citation from the correspondence with occasional reflections but, on the whole, very little explanation or comment. Nor does the Professor indulge in portraiture, though even the well-read student would doubtless be interested in his estimate of Sandwich or Shelburne. He that reads, let him understand.

In 1778 the American Colonies were virtually lost, England was at war with France and on the eve of war with Spain; she had lost command of the sea, Ireland was stirring, there was danger of invasion. The sluggish and incompetent Ministers, North, Sandwich, Lord George Germain were without capacity, cohesion or even coherence. Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor, was in much closer touch with the Bedford Whigs than with his colleagues; Wedderburn, the Attorney-General, that consummate specimen of meanness, cupidity and treachery, boasted of having no personal intercourse with the Prime Minister who, for his part, took credit for 'not interfering with any of their departments'. At Plymouth there were guns but there was no gunpowder. The Commander-in-Chief of the Navy was that Sir Charles Hardy at whose name efficient and experienced officers like Kempenfeldt would 'turn pale and sink'; while the French fleet rode unchallenged in the Channel.

How, then, was the government carried on? By a fantastic system dubbed 'The King's Closet', the continuous personal correspondence of George III with the Ministers. In this endless labour he was supported by Charles Jenkinson, Secretary-at-War but not in the Cabinet, and by the jobbery expert, John Robinson, Secretary of the Treasury. To keep North in office and thereby keep the Whigs out was the King's one inflexible purpose, while men like Fox, Shelburne, Rockingham, Edmund Burke, Richmond and Dunning were in futile, hopeless opposition. By suppleness and dexterity in debate North, with the blind support of the placemen and the King's Friends, was just able to escape defeat from day to day by the narrowest margins. He was in a state of neurasthenia and paralysis of the will and constantly besought the King to relieve him of the odious task; but George was determined that North should carry on, come what might, for he regarded the admission to office of the Whigs as a personal defeat and humiliation.

Since the days of William III Ireland had lain prostrate under the Protestant Ascendancy in all its vileness and completeness. But despite all the artificial hindrances some beginnings of relative prosperity were already discernible when the war brought Ireland's opportunity and revealed the impotence of the corrupt Irish Parliament. Grattan had been tirelessly eloquent about King, Lords and Commons of Ireland—which would have been a very sound structure, had there been any firm basis for it—but it was the American victories and Charlemont's drilled and armed volunteers that made the difference. A pamphleteer at the time wrote that 'there had long been a Protestant interest, a Popish interest and an English interest, but till the year 1778 he had never heard of an Irish interest since the reign of Queen Elizabeth'. By oppression, by the penal laws, by trade restriction and by the incessant draining away of money to absentees the country had been 'kept on the very margin of distress', and distress was now turning into bankruptcy and misery. Lord North, hard pressed to introduce remedial measures, relied on his habitual *vis inertiae*, and here he had the support of the English mercantile classes, notably at Bristol, who were equally hostile to any instalment of humanity to Ireland, or of toleration for Catholics. When at length his proposals appeared, the very cold reception in England contrasted sharply with the immense enthusiasm in Ireland, and it was evident that the bulk of the Whigs preferred that the Irish should have grievances for which to denounce the government than that those grievances should be removed.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the first formation and expression of extra-parliamentary opinion on the proceedings of Parliament, a sort of adumbration of Chartism. Although this radical movement was destined to be checked and driven underground by the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, it had a far-reaching effect on the whole structure of English politics. Professor Butterfield



describes it all in closest reliance on the documentary sources: the committees, the demand for Economical Reform, Burke's speeches, Dunning's famous Resolution, Fox's Demagogic intervention and his open attacks on the King, the question of Irish Legislative Independence, the Gordon Riots and the recovery of the Ministry. So the climax passed without a rising and the people here did not attempt 'to imitate their brethren in America and their brethren in Ireland'. Lord North had to go on for two years longer. In all the tumult and confusion the one unchangeable thing was the adamant will-power of George III.

J. J. DWYER

### EUGÉNIE AND MAURICE DE GUÉRIN

*The Idol and the Shrine.* The diary of Eugénie de Guérin. Translated by Naomi Royde-Smith. (Hollis & Carter. 15s.)

NAOMI ROYDE-SMITH has given to English letters yet another edition of Eugénie de Guérin's famous diary, ably edited, with explanatory chapters, and in a translation of quite singular delicacy and distinction.

It was a private diary kept by Eugénie for her absent brother Maurice. It was written at the family château of Le Cayla in Languedoc, during the 1830s, and though intended for one man only, it was given to the world by their friends after both brother and sister had died. Eugénie's story is the tragedy of the near-saint: in character passionately religious, simple, narrow, and serious, her dangerously forceful powers of loving were focussed upon her younger brother, Maurice de Guérin, whose great prose poem *Le Centaure* was to give him an immortal place in French literature. Their mother died when Maurice was six years old, and entrusted him in a very special manner to little Eugénie, then eleven years old. She took the sacred trust into her pathetic child's hands, and bore it with unutterable tenderness throughout his whole life, and hers, and out into Eternity.

She writes:

He had a far grander christening than any of us before him. I enjoyed it enormously and was sent back to Gaillac next day very much enamoured of the new-born baby. I was four years old. Two years later I came home for good, bringing home a dress I had made for him. I dressed him in it and led him by the hand along the north battlement, and then he walked a few steps quite by himself. I ran to my mother with the news: 'Maurice—Maurice can walk!'

I am crying as I write.

Poor Eugénie, she cried too often as she wrote. But write she had to, because, like her brother, she was a born writer. Through all the love and sorrow of her diary moves the wise, grave, delicate Spirit of Litera-

ture, breathing its cooling air upon the fever of inordinate love. She was a supremely gifted woman and she wrote an exquisite book. The sentences rise and speak and pass with the grace of birds flying. Her words are artless and spontaneous, filled with the grace of perfect simplicity, and seem to engender a kind of light upon the page. She tells of the daily happenings at the château, so that the absent brother in Paris can receive a day-to-day picture of his home :

I love this Sunday routine, so busy, so changeful, so varied. We see everyone as we go in and out, all the women curtsy to us as we pass, and those who are going in the same direction with us chatter about their hens, their flocks, their husbands, their children. . . . The children are shy of *las domaisellos*, as of all unfamiliar things. One of them said to his grandmother when she was coming to see us at Le Cayla : ' *Minino*, don't go to that castle. There's a dungeon in it.' I suppose castles have always terrified people because of the horrors once committed in them.

And again :

Yesterday I mistook the date and advanced by one day. It's no use going quicker than Time, who goes, alas, only too quickly. Are we not already at the end of the month, which is winding up in a great deal of noise. As I write, thunder, wind, and lightning are shaking the castle, and torrential rain is pouring down. I listen to it through my window, but the window-sill is flooded, so I cannot write there this evening as usual. It's a pity, for the window-sill makes a delightful desk overlooking the garden, now all green and fresh and scented with acacias.

Real life is in these pages : the peasants, the patois ; the splendour of Nature, the stars, the trees, the storms. Terror is there, and a touch of the macabre. The animals are described, and the beggars. No wonder that Maurice, earning his living as a writer in the artificial atmosphere of Paris, loved his sister's diary, sent to him in sections and bringing him at regular intervals the very scent of home. And there came to him with it the life of her soul. Eugénie had a profoundly religious soul, and it is not without reason that her book has been compared with Pascal and even with St. Augustine.

She speaks with luminous originality of the things of the soul :

Such a lovely night. I thought of God Who has made our prison so delightful.

The time comes when the heart renounces everything that does not help it to live.

Christianity does not explain everything but it heals everything.

The free bond between the human and the Divine Will is the most sublime act of the human soul, the consummation of Faith, the most intimate participation in grace, which can then flow from God to man and perform miracles.

This last quotation seems to me to be an almost scientifically exact description of what holiness really is. But in spite of these glories Eugénie could be very silly. Perhaps one likes her the better for it. Maurice had deserted the heretical de Lamennais, but Eugénie could not forget the tragic Breton ex-priest. 'How that man haunts me,' she writes. 'I pray that he may be saved. I mourn for his lost glory of sainthood. I have often written to him without signing my letters, so that he may be aware of a mysterious voice mourning and praying for him.' The deep poetry of her nature is apparent in these sentences—they are an echo from the *De Profundis* itself. And yet, what a silly thing to do. And how irritating for de Lamennais!

Eugénie should have been a supremely happy woman because of her unique powers of love: she loved God, she loved Nature, she loved Maurice. But she loved Maurice too much. Reading the ardent sentences one is reminded of the *Imitation of Christ* and its warning against inordinate affection. Barbey d'Aureville describes her appearance: dark and thin, 'her face slain by the soul within'. Great as she was, she was not great enough to sublimate her love to the height where it would have bred serenity, and this failure cost her her life. Or was the flaw to be found in the object of her love? Maurice de Guérin, surrounded as he was by friends and lovers, was better able to inspire passionate love than to feel it.

He stayed away from Le Cayla for twelve long years and he does not seem to have taken any real trouble about the adoring sister whose half-retained love finally burnt her out like a flame. He came home to Le Cayla to die in her arms, and it calls for a tough spirit indeed to read the last section of the book, continued for her own solace and addressed to his spirit after death. Solace there is none, and the reader puts down the book shaken by its storm of love and anguish.

But it seems to me that had she been able to accomplish that mighty sublimation, to integrate the human love with the Divine universal Flame of which she was so well aware, though she would have saved herself a terrible descent into Purgatory, yet she would never have become such a fine writer. The life of the next world is a saving life; it was the life of this world that broke her heart. But the fine arts are of this world, and half-unknown to herself, the saint in her gave way before the writer, just as the love of God gave way before the passionate human flame: all the more dangerous to her spiritual life because it was a pure unfleshy love, already burning on the plane of Divine love and therefore the more able to rival it.

A tragedy indeed. But a tragedy that surely had its blissful ending at last in 'the high rose-gardens' that are not of this world. Because she followed him soon enough, after a few brief years, dying of the same consumption which had taken him. But her beautiful ghost must still haunt Le Cayla where she loved and suffered, watching from her mid-

night window, and in her own sublime phrase, looking long upon 'the infinite unanswering stars'.

ELIZABETH BELLOC

### CRAIGAVON

*Craigavon, Ulsterman.* By St. John Ervine. (Allen & Unwin. 45s.)

THIS immense volume invites indignation, ridicule or boredom: the three most purposeless conditions of mind. Patience, good humour and attempted sympathy should help readers, Irish or English, to extract memories and hopes for what in God's providence is best for Ulster and Ireland; and in consequence equally good for Anglo-American relations and the Catholic Church. There is no doubt that Irish contentment, prosperity and influences can act as immense dispensers of 'light and sweetness' amongst our disarranged communities.

What are we to make of this verbal colossus of a memorial to a great and just statesman, an Ulsterman with all the narrowed obstinacy and undeviating determination of his Province? Ireland and Ulster are as he left them. Partition is his legacy. The gaunt house at Stormont is his mausoleum. He, not the emotional and lovable popularity-hunter Carson, defeated and thwarted all English statesmen, defied the Irish Nationalists and finally scooped two-thirds of Ulster out of Ireland and retained those Thirds under another flag.

This man, without what are called gifts or talents, was incorruptible and insensate in some ways. His character was of iron-grit. He could not have done a mean act to an enemy nor lied even to a trickster. His Yea was so much his Yea and his Nay so much his Nay that the Irish Nationalists knew that his Yea was more worth winning than the Yea of all others. As for his Nay, it is written across the Ulster boundary to-day. All that can be hoped in the dissolution of the future is that it will not prove an instance of Carlyle's Everlasting Nay.

Mr. Ervine, with a pen that can be brilliant and blatant, has exaggerated, overlauded and often stultified any clear biography of the man. James Craig's life is not his full purpose, for he expounds the beliefs of Orange Protestant Ulstermen to their most violent. And on top the views of Mr. Ervine are planted in the most personal, satirical and wounding language he can muster. Of late he has not spared a poor old woman, whom Ireland loves as a symbol, in Madame Gonne Macbride. Not fearing to slash the living, it can be imagined that he chops the dead with a generous blade. Let us say at once that he is cruelly unfair to such as Arthur Griffith and Darrell Figgis, and personally we are inclined to give him the back-hander when he condemns men no less idealists than himself, men who were perhaps better known

to us in the land of the living. When the contemptuous offal which he drops on certain memories is cleared, we can more easily appreciate what is interesting, helpful and even valuable in his book. By writing as an Ulsterman he cannot help writing as an Irishman (as the part of the whole). There is much which is a pleasure to read, such as Craig's relations with Nationalists like Joe Devlin and Jerry Macveagh, or the eulogy of Bishop Doyle. But first let us repudiate the silly abuse of Griffith, who sufficiently loved his ideal to die of grief. 'Pouchy weak eyes' were not his fault, nor was it historical that he 'shuffled through Dublin on feet that were as flat as his mind'. His mind evolved the idea of an Irish Hungary within the Empire and the *Sinn Féin* philosophy. Nor was he particularly like 'sullen-eyed Medea' or 'Thersites impotently cursing'. Nothing is so flat as an epigram which misses accuracy, however readable, and Mr. Ervine strains truth and decency too often to be readable.

Oddly enough, much of his paragraphs on Griffith apply to his own style . . . 'hag-ridden by hate. He could sneer and jeer but could not cheer. He suffered from that last infirmity of a noble nature: the satirical spirit'. Well, so did Swift, and if Mr. Ervine's nature was a little nobler he might have been more successful in the satire with which he savages those whom he must dislike personally.

Not that it matters in the least when people are dead. It is all as futile as hanging the bodies of regicides at Tyburn. History often demands stark judgements, but woe to the inaccurate historian if other historians can penetrate his garbled or garrulous armour. And woe to the mudslinger, if friends of the befouled dead are still in the land of the living!

Darrell Figgis played his part in the gun-running of the Nationalists, and indulged in the heroics and attitudes of the time. But why revel in the poor man's 'murky finish'? It is true that Figgis, his wife and his paramour perished. The Protestant Christian will think of them in terms of sheer pity. The Catholic Christian will quickly say a decade on the rosary for their souls. But to rub in the ghastly mess with glee is not worthy of an Irish author once not far from the first rank. Of this paragraph, Allen and Unwin should be heartily ashamed, as well as for a silly paragraph railing against the Prince of Wales for coming 'scowling' to Belfast with 'glum and sulky looks'. A broken man is always an easy target, for it is not libellous, and apparently even the ghoul does not err against any laws except those of good taste.

Nor is it libellous to mention Brigadier-General Gordon Shephard's part in running the arms of Howth as 'frivolous, an example of that mindless flippancy which makes many people regard Englishmen as incurably adolescent'. For many of the empurplements which colour this swollen book, there may be personal memory or historical hint or downright proof. But in this one and last instance, Mr. Ervine could not



have chosen a feebler or more inaccurate epithet for Gordon Shephard than 'frivolous'. Him we knew as mess-mates at Eton, and reckon his reckless courage and sense of fair-play above the average. He was a daring yachtsman, a British officer and a Liberal thinker. His type was monumentally described in George Meredith's novel *Beauchamp's Career*. Believing that the Ulstermen had been surreptitiously allowed to run their guns, he decided to risk his life and certainly his career in helping to run the Nationalist counter-cargo. Whatever his motives, he was not 'frivolous'. Rebellious, undisciplined, politically-perverted, call him what you will, it is a pleasing fact that a British officer was largely instrumental in arming the unarmed Irish Volunteers. No one dared complain of his conduct, and as an air pioneer he perished three years later in the clouds over France. His mother, Lady Shephard, had become a Catholic, and died believing her dear boy had come within what is called 'the baptism of desire'. This seems the happy place to mention the fact, as well as to relieve his memory of the supposition that he was 'frivolous' or 'flippant' in any of the daring actions of his short life. It was a pity Mr. Ervine never enjoyed ten minutes' conversation with him.

The Ulster type Mr. Ervine knows better, and throughout this rambling book a patient collector can glean an impressive and straightforward picture of the Northern mind. It is a pity that 'they deny that the Southern Irish, however witty they may be, have any sense of humour, and they decline to be deceived by charm'. . . . Southerners and Northerners at least invent funny stories about each other, but one of these seems only 'silly' to Mr. Ervine. It is on a par with the stories told of Aberdeen, for Belfast invites such from Southern wit. It is the old story that an Ulster Minister asked that the Norfolk Regiment should be removed from Belfast because, in his mind, the name of Norfolk was associated with Rome. The fact that an English General published the story (which made a good jest for a day) seriously does not prove the Southerners humourless nor that they ever used the story to convict Belfast of bigotry.

The reader peruses an essay on Ulster beginnings, virtues, characters, and only casually glimpses the subject of the Biography. The Craigs stood high in the distilling world, for the father of Lord Craigavon discovered the great secret of 'grogging' whisky barrels. Mr. Ervine is the greatest retailer of tangents and irrelevancies in literature. Omar Khayyám, William Morris, and the rival value of the Vatican and the Rockefeller Institute fill up two pages, and scores more illustrate everything and everybody except the forgotten Craigavon. The process of 'grogging' appears to have been applied to his Biography, if the process is accurately described as the pouring of quarts of boiling water into an empty barrel, which was swished round until there flowed 'a violent liquor which acted on the stoutest stomach like

sheet lightning'. This is a fair parallel to Mr. Ervine's method of writing Biography.

All instances of toleration and respect are valuable, for such are crumbs of comfort: but Mr. Ervine is too fond of recalling forgotten bigotries and angers and darkneses which cloud both sides. It is better to recall the Protestant collection to pay for a new Mass House in Belfast in 1784, and Archbishop Crolly's saying that he would send any prejudiced priest to Belfast for his cure! Why then revive the McCann case, the *Ne Temere* and all that was used to beat up Protestants into electoral frenzy during the Home Rule elections of this century? Very small thorns prick his writing thumb. Cardinal MacRory omitted to send any message of condolence at Craigavon's death to the Ulster Government, of which he disapproved and which had shewn him neither courtesy nor consideration. It would be equally historical to mention that the Cardinal, attended by a chaplain, stood humbly in the churchyard of St. Patrick's old Cathedral while Archbishop D'Arcy was being buried. For that scholarly Primate of another Church, he showed a respect which was repaid at his own funeral. Mr. Ervine tells how he attended in 1900 the funeral of Vere Foster, and the eulogy of that great Irish benefactor, who incurred fever in his personal efforts to change the emigration laws, makes a moving paragraph. Foster was an Old Etonian, like Horace Plunkett, and a discursus on both is evoked by some writer's pleasure that Craig was not sent to an English Public School. After some ten pages, in which the abduction of a Protestant girl in 1858 and the sorrows of Mrs. McCann, deserted by a Catholic husband in 1910, are discussed, to say nothing of a Protestant lady who was refused as a librarian in Mayo in 1930, we reach James Craig's education. He was able to preserve his Belfast accent at Merchiston, near Edinburgh. Thus he 'avoided all the backwash of the Arnoldian days'. Arnold of Rugby is well trounced for discolouring English speech, and uniforming their minds. But Craig—James Craig—when does he begin his career? Distinctions, memories, anecdotes are few to be found. By 1889 he managed to attend the opening of the Eiffel Tower, and obtained admission by presenting an old Belfast tramway ticket. He became an office boy and a stockbroker. He took to yachting, which taught him that though 'the sea was his passion' he was colour-blind and could not 'distinguish red from green'. This was not a defect that he suffered later in politics. To the fury of his father he invested in Icelandic geysers. He passed into the Boer war, showed courage, learnt organization, and was taken prisoner. He then entered politics, and Book Two opens. Three hundred pages later the page heading is the same. He is still entering politics!

A great deal had happened in Ulster, and even more so in the world. Mr. Ervine stuffs in as much as he can collect from newspapers or encyclopaedias. We have a complete list of Plays produced at the

Court Theatre as part of an appraisal of the Edwardian Era—but Craig, Craig, James Craig? He disappears like a needle in and out of a haystack of miscellany.

It is a relief to find Craig elected to Parliament by 1906 after one failure at the polls and a success in matrimony. He was married by Dean Sheppard in the Chapel Royal. So great and convinced a loyalist could have done no less, but simple souls in Ulster were disturbed to read that their true-blue James Craig had been married in a *chapel*!

There never was a more muddled volume. To our dismay, on p. 124 'the Speaker of the Northern Parliament reports his death to the House', but happily he wins an election on p. 130. By p. 135 he has convulsed the House with a Bull, while Mr. Ervine is away punishing the lifeless effigy of Augustine Birrell. For the weak and unlucky he has no mercy: 'an utter and unforgivable failure' or 'this forcible—feeble, frivolous-minded Leigh Hunt intellectually of his time'. Even Queen Victoria gets a crack in the eye as 'that lone, lorn critter, Mrs. Gummidge, always thinking of the Old 'Un'.

And so the volume meanders. We are not spared a list of Squire Chaplin's bed-books or Dr. Crippen's murder and elopement. The Sidney Street battle follows. But what did Craig care?

The Home Rule elections of 1910 increased Craig's majority. On the following page the wretched Richard Piggott, the forger of the Parnell letters, shoots himself! Since he must be dragged in, we will mention the belief of those nearest to Parnell that Piggott did not shoot himself nor did he go to Madrid of his own volition. As a devout Catholic, he had not the will or wish to destroy himself, and Catholics always allowed him the benefit of the doubt. . . . The second century of pages introduces the Abbé Loisy and Father Tyrrell, and by way of colouring Rome's obscurantism towards all Modernists, we hear that 'that abhorrent Saint Jerome pursued the *Ulsterman* Pelagius with venom that was almost murderous'. And still the pages signal *He enters Politics* but the story had to be delayed by the sinking of the *Titanic* and Thomas Hardy's lament, occupying a whole page. Why not a list of survivors?

The book is unreadable and unreviewable, but it would be wrong to let Craigavon's noble and granite memory to be obscured. His attitude to Catholicism, which he could not understand or like, was untinged by bigotry. His friendships with Catholic Ulstermen give the greatest hope for Ireland's future peace. There can be no doubt that his massive character often stood between Belfast 'Papishes' and massacre. He even had friends amongst the old English Catholics, and a letter from Lord Rankeillour to the author of the book is worth extracting from a footnote:

Not only had I personally the highest opinion of him, but so had my uncle Lord Fitzalan . . . He would have done anything to

prevent Ulster being governed from Dublin, and it was solely on this, and not on religious grounds. At the same time, he had one of those queer insights into the feelings of his Irish opponents which seems entirely denied to Saxons like myself. I remember he gave the best defence I have ever heard of the political action of the Irish clergy which, though he could not approve, he extenuated on the ground that they went to the furthest point possible with their flocks in order to prevent the latter from becoming revolutionists of a continental type.

His uncle, who became the last Irish Viceroy, contributed to Ulster's Fighting Fund (this is rather startling) but modified the gift by writing: 'If I find it is being used in an attack on orthodox, and not Hibernian, Popery, I shall have to come over and study the best means of incendiarism on Craigavon.' What a queer distinction!

The political use of the King's name, to say nothing of his flag as a Protestant emblem, and much more so, the employment of the name of God may be only a matter of bad taste: but it is curious how God is credited with the coming of Craigavon and the success of the initial gun-running. There is a picture worthy of Cromwellian annals of Crawford, the Ulster gun-runner, sinking on his knees to pray God help him carry his cargo to its destination. The gun-running was successful, for 'the hand of James Craig was here, exact, precise and perfectly timed'. The Nationalist gun-running was a muddled performance, and presumably God was indifferent. Charles Burgess, who shared in the feat, was destined to 'the bad providence of Satan'—if theology admits such a term.

The story of the Treaty, the negotiations and the unhappy murders, which disfigured both sides, will no doubt be elucidated in the justice of history. On the whole, one sympathizes with Lloyd George, who more than once is discovered double crossing both sides. Lloyd George and de Valera appear as 'the village attorney bargaining with the village pedagogue'. Michael Collins figures as 'Caliban'. In fact, Nationalists are guyed very high-heartedly. Even Sir John Lavery is accused of using 'partisan paint' in his unpleasant portraiture of the Ulstermen, while the Sinn Feiners were made extremely affable. Perhaps this was only due to the realism in Lavery's brush. He was no respecter of features, and even Cardinal Logue, far from being flattered, complained that his portrait resembled 'a monkey in the bush'. Craig had the sense not to complain at all.

Every now and again a whiff of his Biography leaks through the heavy clouds and gaseousness of the book. Craig was always fearless, and refused to give up his Catholic friendships. Tim Healy and Joe Devlin were political enemies, but both were his close friends. Fanatics complained that he attended a service for William Redmond in a Catholic Church. 'He did not despise many people, but he despised

deeply those who were capable of such a complaint.' Such was Craig.

Politically, Craig won the game. He was the stronger and more consistent leader. He won when many pieces were against him, and victory needed a little cunning and all his strength. With the events of the Second War, his position was, so to speak, consolidated on a silver platter. He died soon after, and there we leave him. Carson was lucky enough to see his own memorial in stone and Craig was equally lucky not to see his in print.

The book's weight of wave carries along the reader, but often drowns him. How much is history? Propaganda must be urged of much of the book's stuffing. Thirteen pages of appendix are used to contrast illiteracy in the Southern Counties with the North. The most accurate of statistics often bear paltry fruit. Some people consider that the illiterate Gaelic speaker, with his wealth of folk-lore and song, is more educated than some products of Board Schools. Statistics are shown to point the contrast between North and South in supplying volunteers to the British Army during the war. It can only be added, judging by the decoration list, that quality made up for quantity. To argue and counter-argue these dead quarrels leads nowhere. One historical question is hardly mentioned, and that is how three Ulster Counties came to be thrown to the wolves after so much blood-signing of the Covenant? This 'betrayal' of the Protestants in Donegal, Cavan and Monaghan is likely to be made the excuse for the 'betrayal' of other Counties in years to come. Yet the names of those three Counties must have been written on the hearts of Carson and Craigavon when they died. The world does not realize that Ulster herself was partitioned—but the reader must wish that this bulky volume had been partitioned several times over!

SHANE LESLIE

#### THE SOCIAL LIFE OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY CATHOLICS

*The Recollections of a Northumbrian Lady, 1815-1866, being The Memoirs of Barbara Charlton (née Tasburgh).* Edited by L. E. O. Charlton. (Jonathan Cape. 15s.)

BOTH by descent and by marriage the writer of these Memoirs belonged to the old Catholic landed families. (Her father was Michael Anne of Burghwallis Hall, near Doncaster, who had taken the name of Tasburgh on his marriage to the heiress of the old Norfolk family of that name.) Nor was it out of keeping with the traditions of those families that her childhood from 1821 to 1830 should have been spent in France. Naturally her recollections of those years are childhood recollections,



but we get a picture of the convent *des Dames Anglaises* in the Rue de Fossés St. Victor being supplanted as the fashionable educational establishment for the French and English Catholic aristocracies by the convent of the Sacré Cœur with Madame Barat at the head of it. The young Wiseman flits across the scene, fresh from Ushaw, but already made much of by the English Catholics. At the age of nine she is presented at the court of Charles X at Versailles, and her father and mother spend *St. Hubert* at Chantilly with the Duc de Bourbon—a social engagement of some delicacy it would seem.

Sent home in 1830 at a warning (given by George Sand) of the impending revolution, she remarks: 'There was much company at Burghwallis the first winter of my return, for the militia had been called out to put down the riots against machinery and to prevent the rick-burning that was everywhere going on.' Thus lightly are the industrial troubles of the time put aside, and there follows a picture of the social life led by her and the sort of Catholic family to which she belonged in the 1830s—race-week balls at Doncaster and York, country-house parties, seasons in London, including the Coronation season of 1838. It is very different from the picture which Newman suggests in his Second Spring sermon of the Catholic gentry confined to gloomy houses closed in with high walls and iron gates. Barbara Tasburgh, as she then was, would seem to have had little experience of such an existence. Indeed the picture of the social life that was open to the old Catholic families in the nineteenth century is perhaps the most interesting thing about these Memoirs. Later, after she was married, she and her husband stayed at Alnwick Castle, and with the Marquess of Westminster at Eaton, took a house at Clifton or Leamington for the winter, and were apparently accepted by the county families as a matter of course. For a time they lived at Durham, where she tells us they mixed freely in the society of the prebendaries and their wives, and Dean Waddington was most friendly, though it is true that Mrs. Jenkins, the daughter of John Cam Hobhouse (Lord Broughton), took umbrage at this. Admittedly, too, the anti-Catholic feeling aroused by Wiseman's Pastoral in 1850 did not pass unnoticed by her, and she was very critical of Wiseman for having occasioned it, but she and her husband were at Hesleyside at the time, and it is interesting to note that she says that Northumberland was the only county in England which was free of the 'No Popery' agitation, and this she attributes to the influence of the Duke. By the same token she states that the Catholic interest in the county caused Sir George Grey, member for North Northumberland, to lose his seat at the 1852 election because of the part he had played in the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill.

After her marriage, which owing to the eccentric objections of her father was a Gretna Green affair, the background of all this social activity was her husband's home at Hesleyside on the North Tyne.

It is interesting to note that her husband, when he came into the estate, concerned himself much with local affairs, improving roads, getting bridges built, and playing a prominent part in the opening of the North Tyne railway. It has sometimes been held against the old Catholic families that, owing to their long exclusion from public affairs, they were not very willing to play their part in the life of the countryside in which they lived, even when it became possible for them to do so. But it is probable that this always applied less in the North than in other parts of England.

While it is true that the *Memoirs* have no pretensions to literary style, they have a very decided piquancy from the outspokenness of Barbara's remarks. As might be expected, her feelings were all on the side of the old Catholics as against the converts, in so far as there was opposition between the two parties. Writing in her old age she remembers a large Catholic party (nearly a hundred strong) at Richmond in 1837 for a dance, and comments on what a handsome and distinguished assembly they were. 'No Catholic party like that one could be got up in these days. The depression of the old Catholic type seems to have come on very rapidly; occasioned it may be presumed by an influx of converts and colonists.' She describes how at a ball in York in 1835 Princess Victoria went through a quadrille with Lord Morpeth, 'who danced like a shirt hanging in the wind to dry'. But some of her judgements are manifestly unfair, and, even at this date, are calculated to give pain to those connected with the objects of her attack.

Very matter-of-fact, she must have been a woman of great courage and spirit, for life was not easy in either her own or her husband's family at times, though her own marriage was happy enough. It is brought home, too, how much more precarious life was in those days of still primitive medical science. Many children were born, but, even in these rich families, probably not more than half reached maturity.

Throughout no values are questioned, and it is the fascination of the book that it gives a picture of an age and a class, which, for better or for worse, has vanished, but which was at least perfectly sure of itself.

F. G. SITWELL

### LOGIC

*Barbara Celarent*. A Description of Scholastic Dialectic. By Thomas Gilby, O.P. (Longmans Green and Co. 18s.)

IF the present reviewer permits himself to remark that he has used *Barbara Celarent* with much enjoyment as a bedside book, the suggestion is not that this is its primary purpose, but that it possesses a humane attraction which is unusual in a treatment of logic. It may be, indeed, that academic pleasantries are out of fashion. Life is real, life is earnest,

murmurs the contemporary logician as he manipulates his symbols in order to demonstrate that either  $P$  or  $P$  implies  $P$ . A logician who not only avoids the appearance of algebra but finds it natural to proceed discursively by way of joke and allusion is too full-bodied a guest at a feast of skeletons. He must be firmly put in his place. Something like this must be the explanation why Fr. Gilby's book has received a rather chilly welcome from one or two reviewers. *Barbara Celarent* would, perhaps, have been better appreciated in the more assured and civilized epoch which produced the Rev. Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

Let us hasten to admit that Fr. Gilby ignores all the recent developments of logic and presents us only with the classical logic of Aristotle and the scholastics. Any implied judgement that modern logic was negligible would be unjustified. Yet, as a logician as candid as the late Professor Susan Stebbing acknowledged, the modern developments are in organic relation with classical logic, and classical logic still provides the groundwork. It is no final objection to an introductory book that it confines itself to this groundwork. No one is more likely than Fr. Gilby to encourage his reader to penetrate further, and in the fullness of time this penetration may well reach the rarefied regions in which logic and mathematics meet in a ghostly embrace. Even so, it will be to the advantage of a novice to have begun in a region in which logical analysis is more recognizably related to common processes of thought.

Fr. Gilby covers the usual ground of a logical treatise, dealing in turn with conception, with judgement and with reasoning, devoting a section to fallacies and ending with a specimen of formal scholastic disputation. As his subtitle implies, he is interested not only in demonstrative logic but also in those less clear concepts and merely probable arguments which are more familiar in real life than formal proofs in the manner of Euclid. He takes his examples from a wide range of literature, often rejoicing his reader with the exactly right allusion and occasionally, it must be admitted, baffling him with a quotation whose origin cannot be recalled. The result is an introduction to the climate of Thomistic thinking, a sphere in which logic has all its rights but humanity is not forgotten.

This is a book which can be read either before or after studying logic. If it is read before, it ought to be a stimulus to approach the initially forbidding abstractions and classifications of the customary logical textbook. If it is read afterwards, it is a refreshing recapitulation and application of logical notions. In either case it makes its appeal as an eminently civilized book, in which a scholar wears his learning lightly and does not affect the esoteric superiority of what is nowadays known as the 'expert'. Perhaps it is too civilized for the mid-twentieth century, but, if so, so much the worse for the atomic age.

D. J. B. HAWKINS

## EXISTENCE AND ANALOGY

*Existence and Analogy.* By E. L. Mascall. (Longmans, 12s. 6d.)

FOR a long period the work of St. Thomas appears to have been looked at as if it were like Santa Maria sopra Minerva, the great church of his province in Rome, the only survivor of a Gothic interlude between Romanesque and Renaissance; then for a rather longer period, after his apotheosis at Trent, a massive respectability was built round him hiding the leap and imagination of his thought. Recent researches have gone to show how misrepresented he is as the elaborator of a vast system of concepts, for his theology is close to the pulse of history and his philosophy emphasizes that truth is found in the affirmation of fact past the definition of meaning. The spiritual sense of the scriptures, on which he sets such store, is not now so easily dismissed as the conceit of his period. He is a Hellenist, but also a preacher, and his sustained dialectic of ideas does not forget that the Old Testament is a proclamation rather than a plan and the New Testament a deed rather than a disquisition.

The revisions made by Professor Gilson to his standard work, *Le Thomisme*, during the last quarter of a century are symptoms of these changes in the climate of appreciation. Dr. Mascall can be counted in the movement, and his last book, particularly in those parts where he frees himself from the stiltedness of one French school, is rarely so lost in lexicography—to appropriate his quotation from Dr. Johnson—as to forget that words are the daughters of earth, and that things are the sons of heaven. It is a supplement to his earlier book, *He Who Is*, which developed the conclusion that God's existing is his essence. Now from divinity he begins to push into the outer profaneness.

This is where St. Thomas best displays himself, as neither a concealed platonist nor a half-converted peripatetic, but as somebody well away on his own. He is not just the last of the Latin Fathers, not just the first of the Aristotelian schoolmen: either title could be disputed. From the traditional divines he differs by the philosophical zest of his welcome for the material world; from the new scholastics by his penetration into existence by the jerk of judgement, not into essence by analysis. That his philosophy is keyed to ordinary experience is at once both its strength and weakness, for often his thought is disentangled with difficulty from contemporary science; though it may be argued that the trappings of later fashions are really the nuisance, and that his commentary on the *Physics* is unduly neglected.

His doctrine is not a collection of well-contrived parts that can be taken to pieces and studied in detail without constant reference to the whole. Those who understand him best find themselves compelled to start far from their special subject, and so Dr. Mascall, in contrasting

the essentialist and existentialist approaches to theism in the centre-piece of his book, has to revolve round the question of creation. God is not bound by presupposed material and is not involved in his effects; the fresh play of divine causality in and through every moment of existence quickens the theology of grace and mercy, and also the metaphysical pluralism in which a kinship of all things beyond the predicaments is discerned.

Essence may be called a mode of existence; existence is certainly not a mode of essence, to be explicated in a concept. Yet we may do more than exclaim at it or leave it to poetry. That existence can, indeed must, enter into the calculations of the straitest science is the conviction of St. Thomas: so we are led to the topic of analogy. Dr. Mascall treads gently where two of the greatest Dominican Master-Generals, Cajetan and Ferrariensis, have fallen out, yet he gives a clear account of the mingled modesty and ambition of the method which passes out of linguistics, just as existential judgements break out from logic. *Existence and Analogy* is a well-argued and readable expansion of the theme that is at full strength brings the mind up short against the infinite, and that as sets it moving again.

THOMAS GILBY.

### THE DANGERS OF RADIO

*Broadcasting and Society.* By Harman Grisewood. (S.C.M. Press. 2s. 6d.)

THE Controller of the Third Programme apologizes for the 'discontinuous and inadequate' treatment of his theme in this small but highly important book. The main impression left with the reader is, on the contrary, of the great skill with which the author has infused unity and coherence into the discussion of a subject bristling with complexities and with almost no previous research to guide him. The source of that unity is of course the fact that the author writes as a Christian. One of the supreme dangers of radio is, as Mr. Grisewood is concerned to remind us, that by its constant 'whirling of all sorts of opinions and influences through the listener's mind' it may end by destroying all his faculties of acceptance and rejection and make him indifferent to truth and falsehood, incapable of crucial decision, a stranger to faith. Mr. Grisewood is acutely aware of this danger precisely because his participation in both worlds, the world of radio and the world of faith, is so intimate. He knows the 'inwardness' of both. This is a book in which the fact of the author's Christian faith makes all the difference. It might so easily have been otherwise. It is essentially a consideration of the influence of radio on society and of society's responsibility for radio, or more specifically, for the BBC, from the Christian standpoint.



Broadcasting plays a highly important part in that vast network of institutions from the 'unconscious pressures' of which it is increasingly difficult to escape. We are all involved and implicated and the question for the Christian is whether, on balance, broadcasting is accelerating, or whether it can retard, the wholesale process of secularization which the other great impersonal instruments of mass-communication push forward with daily increasing pressure. Max Picard has discerned a close relationship between radio and Nazism, both of them destructive of the private and the personal, both invading territories which 'do not belong to them', expanding aimlessly, supreme instruments of dissociation and fragmentation, obliterating all 'definite standards and limits', breaking down the healing barriers of silence. Nazi society was indeed the terrifying culmination of trends which are at work in all Western societies, and Mr. Grisewood analyses them as the combination of outward unification and standardization with less and less interior harmony in the individual personality. The 'unity' produced by scientific methods of mass-communication is like 'the paper covering the cracks in a wall', purely superficial and only hiding an increasing fragmentation and disharmony of spirit. The four million listeners to a religious service may seem to form a unity but it is not the organic unity of a living organism, for the four millions are personally unknown to each other, they do not participate in and with each other, they are not 'members one of another' as are the members of the local church. A broadcast service and indeed any broadcast performance is an abstraction from the real thing, a substitute, a dilution. The great danger is that people should become increasingly satisfied with the substitute, the dilution, the abstraction and no longer want, no longer know the reality and the fullness of the original. Broadcasting is not the real, concrete world, but like the film, it gives an illusion of reality and the more the illusion is accepted as the only reality, as more real than reality, the more the original world on which broadcasting depends for its material becomes impoverished. If everyone sits back and spends all his leisure listening to the radio there will of course in the end be nothing to listen to, since broadcasting is not a creative world of its own but essentially dependent on the already existing worlds of music, the theatre, education, science, art and so on, from which it draws its material. It is on the 'quality of vigour' in each of these autonomous worlds that the quality of broadcasting itself depends. It has no power to become creative of its own accord. 'It acts like a hot-bed making all manner of seedlings grow quicker and bigger and juicier.'

That is the first great danger: the impoverishment of the real world, and thus the ultimate impoverishment of broadcasting. The cure, and it is the cure of which our society in general stands in dire need, is a vigorous renewal of 'real', primary, and therefore, local creative activities of all kinds, 'active engagement' of the individual

instead of passive listening, a reconsideration of broadcasting as essentially 'not a substitute for, but a stimulus to our *own* creativity'.

The other great danger is that even the serious discussion of the great problems of faith and philosophy, by the very ease and comfort in which they are received by the fireside, may become trivialized. Hard work and decision are involved in the assimilation of serious thinking and because no initial physical effort is now required to gain access to it the intellectual effort required is also more difficult to attain. It is all too easy to regard the high thinking of the Third Programme as merely 'entertainment on a different plane'. Broadcasting raises the ultimate problem involved in the 'democratization' of culture. Does the 'universal accessibility of everything to everybody' (Picard) necessarily involve the watering-down of standards of thought and culture generally? It certainly makes it more difficult to cultivate the garden of one's own personality, to concentrate deeply, to think 'in long breaths'. 'All private life is being invaded by generalized utterance' (Canon Demant). It is, as Picard has remarked, increasingly difficult to restrict one's interests. 'It cannot happen today that someone, like Jakob Burckhardt, deliberately keeps away from Rembrandt (where there is a real person, there is a frontier inside the person, that is the very nature of true persons) but here in the world of radio everything is accessible to everyone. Man is the place occupied by the noise, the space for the noise to fill.' Or, as Mr. Grisewood finely says: 'It is the test of a man to know when impartiality should give place to decision.' He believes that the time is ripe for broadcasting itself to encourage more affirmatively and more vigorously the renewal and rediscovery of the 'severe and profound philosophy, the spiritual discipline and profession of faith' which are required if the fullness of authentic European culture, of which Liberalism is the last remnant, is to be reborn. 'Broadcasting must take more and more the initiative unless it is simply to mirror the course of self-destruction which is being followed. We all are Perseus against Medusa and broadcasting should be our shield of Pallas. . . . Suffer us not to mock ourselves with falsehood. Teach us to care and not to care. Teach us to sit still.'

STANLEY GODMAN

#### FRENCH REVIEWS

THE problems of the apostolate loom large in recent issues of several of the French Catholic reviews. *Études* for January opens with an article on the mission of France by André Rétif, describing the specialized formation given at the seminary for 'home missions' at Lisieux. Founded by the hierarchy in 1941, it was committed to the direction of the Sul-

picians: in common with other seminaries, it claims to build up first of all an apostle of the Eternal Word, a man of firm character wholly devoted to the service of God; but it is novel in the methods it adopts to make such priests men of their time, capable of addressing our contemporaries in the language and tone which alone have any chance of being effective. Hence such unheard of diversions as spending two years in the merchant marine for the seminarist who proposes to work among seamen. In this the object is not primarily the experience of poverty or the understanding of the milieu, but to acquire there a love for those to whom he will minister: 'He goes to it as to a retreat, it is a novitiate for life, he must know the insecurity of the poor—one does not play at poverty.' There is a risk, it is the vocation of comparatively few, but all life—and most of all the life of a true apostle—implies danger; and the taking of risks has already been crowned with success.

In the December and January issues of *La Vie Intellectuelle* Fathers Maydiou and Serrand survey a wider field of the apostolate and ask themselves in conclusion what may still be the mission of France to a paganized world. Contrasting the tiny Christian group of St. Paul's time, distributed in a number of Churches each of which was the object of the apostle's particular love, with the universal Church of today, they remark: 'The farther we go, the more difficult it seems for the Christian to be a Catholic. The more the Mystical Body grows, the less convenient it becomes to embrace it.' It is not merely a narrow parochialism which hinders a more universal outlook; apart from the physical difficulty of being solicitous for all the churches in the variety of the modern world, there is a not unjustifiable pride in France: 'Our Catholicism is burdened with years, with honours, titles, decorations, memories.' To get at a true picture of the situation and its possibilities, they first survey the Church in the world under the headings of *Chrétientés souffrantes* (the persecuted Churches of Poland, Czechoslovakia, etc.), *Chrétientés triomphantes* (U.S.A., with its strong element of 'Irishism', and the Spanish-speaking countries), *Chrétientés tranquilles* (France, England, Switzerland, Belgium, Portugal, Southern Italy), *Chrétientés missionnaires*. They note the increase of apostasies—even of priests and religious—in the midst of 'triumphant' Catholicism, the condition of the victims of a facile apologetic and a comfortable theology in the countries where persecution is raging. France, calm and often somnolent, has the advantage of being still the scene of an undecided conflict between the faith and atheistic materialism, of possessing a Catholicism free from all compromising alliances with the established order. But the position is very uncertain. There is no increase in the number of practising Catholics, but there is an improvement in their quality: the practising Catholic today does more than fulfil the minimum obligations. Catholic Action has not developed as it might have done over the past ten years, and there is still too much of a

tendency to prefer Christian humanism as an aim instead of making men Christians. Catholic thought is handicapped when, for instance, the professors at the Institut Catholique have to turn to other occupations in their leisure time in order to secure their subsistence. The Church will triumph, but French Catholicism must extricate itself from these difficulties if it is to make its proper contribution to the final success.

*Économie et Humanisme*, founded as a review in 1922, now appears in three sections: *Idées et Forces* (quarterly), *Le Diagnostic Économique et Social* and *Lettre de la Tourette* (monthly). It claims to study economic problems in relation to man instead of in their purely profit-making aspect. Its contributors, fully aware of the principles of economic analysis, are particularly attentive to the concrete situation and provide ample and highly relevant statistics. Nevertheless few reviews of Kinsey's statistical study of sexual behaviour have been so devastating as that which appeared in *Idées et Forces* last September: the main fault lies not in the statistics but in the fact that they cannot be presented otherwise than in the light of 'a metaphysical conception of man, and it is better that this should be explicit'.

Statistics also appear in the December issue of that excellent Belgian review, the *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, in an article on the faith of college students. A series of questionnaires on matters of faith was presented to twenty-six Catholic colleges, on the whole with satisfying results. Majorities of over 90 per cent gave the correct answer to the more obvious questions, but many were confused about the nature of faith—40 per cent said that it was not necessary for salvation—and some tended towards indifferentism; objections to Catholicism which had most impressed a group representing about 25 per cent of the pupils included the bad example of clerics, the Church's interest in the rich, the failure of Catholics to be better than others. This review, too, is keenly aware of the concrete while paying adequate attention to the deeper problems of theology. Many short reviews, understanding but critical, constitute one of its most attractive features.

EDWARD QUINN

#### GERMAN REVIEWS

*Herder-Korrespondenz* scarcely lends itself to comment here, being already to some extent a digest of articles mainly drawn from German periodicals. But the excellent service it performs also in listing important articles from Catholic reviews, recording events in the life of the Church and providing German translations of papal and similar documents, should be noted.

*Hochland's* articles are leisurely and often timeless. It will not there-

fore be out of place to look back to the October number, in which Franz Schnabel writes about the Bismarckian problem, Ida Görres about Lourdes, and Richard Seewald on the possibilities of a Christian art of painting in our time. Schnabel calls for a new estimate of the character and aims of Bismarck: friends and foes have hitherto been limited in their judgements by the conditions of their time, seeing a direct line from Bismarck to Hitler or attributing more recent political errors to the failure to maintain the Bismarckian tradition, in either case restricting their viewpoint to a period of little over a century. Even for that century there is lacking in the history books, claims Schnabel, a great and tragic chapter: the account of the way in which Europe and most of all the German people were cut off from the older traditions. Bismarck hastened the advance towards individualism, and a forced uniformity, but the uprooting had begun and chaos would have come without his intervention. He was an opponent of religious indifference, a sincere Christian, but failed to bring his Christianity to bear on his political acts because he could never appreciate the claims of a Christian world-outlook. Metternich had the conception of universality more clear in his mind, although he was more distant from a vital Christianity than Bismarck. The latter honestly thought that the power-state, as it emerged in the eighteen hundreds, could alone secure the welfare of the people. He did not appreciate the significance of the forces he was trying to exploit or the duty of the statesman to look beyond politics to the higher aims which they must also serve.

Ida Görres characteristically faces the critics of Lourdes with an admission of the truth that is in their assertions. The commercialism, the sentimentality, the 'hell of the flesh', which Zola and Huysmans particularly see there, are inevitable. 'Can true religion be other than "profane"?' Religion is not a hot-house plant, it must be realized in people, in their habits and inclinations: the stronger, more deeply-rooted it is, the more is it coloured by their tints, formed according to their shapes. Quoting Huysmans, she sums up: in a hospital for souls, where poison is worked out by love, stupidity and ugliness are scarcely relevant.

The art that is characteristic for our time, claims Seewald, is that which corresponds to psycho-analysis—the religion of our time. Such an art is surrealism, and this is not only non-Christian, it is anti-Christian, daemonic. Does this mean that Christian art is impossible in our day? Now the definition of Christian art is not at all clear: it is not that which belongs to the Christian ages, still less must it be identified with European art merely because Europe is regarded as baptized in contrast to the heathen elsewhere. Even the Christian content of a picture may be a mere accident. One might say, 'Can one pray before it?' But we can pray before a picture which a great master chances to give to a church and thousands pray daily before objects which are not



artistic at all. We can only call that Christian art which is the expression of Christianity as the dominant ideal of an age. The only way to bring back a Christian art in our day is to indicate the Christian spirit *indirectly*, to paint things as they are from the hand of God. We can and ought to go back to the Greeks as the great Christian masters in every field of culture have done, to measure and order, not giving a superficial veneer of Christianity to pure humanism but bringing whatever is good, well-ordered and disciplined in creation under the rule of Christ: like the Cathedrals of Reims and Chartres, of Bamberg and Pisa, wholly Greek and wholly Christian, ought the art of our time to be.

*Frankfurter Hefte* is still lively and concerned mostly with immediate problems of the day. The title alone of an article by Bernhard Wegmann in the November issue is significant: 'Schizophrenia of world-economy.' It is engaged in a controversy with its equally lively but more conservative contemporary, the *Rheinischer Merkur*, on the possibilities of Catholic co-operation with Socialism. An informative article by Walter Dirks in the January issue explains how little anti-semitism had to do with the Offenbach affair, mentioned with a certain amount of misgiving in the English press some time ago. Briefly stated, the facts are that a Dr. Lewin, a Jew who had suffered in the concentration camp, was made medical director of the women's clinic at Offenbach and later asked to withdraw in favour of a non-Jewish competitor. Superficially, the incident seems disturbing. Dirks shows that Dr. Lewin was far from being the most capable applicant and that it was precisely the fear of being considered anti-semitic together with a desire to offer some compensation for the past persecution of Jews by Germans that the post was ever offered to him. Then, in addition to the desire to appoint the most efficient doctor, it was realized that patients would be embarrassed not through dislike of Jews but on account of their uneasy conscience about past events. Not surprisingly, there are many thin skins in Germany today.

Evelyn Waugh and Graham Greene continue to be popular in Germany and Austria. The Austrian *Wort und Wahrheit* published in January a translation of the former's 'American Century'. In the same issue Isabella Rüttenauer writes on Hamann, Kant's contemporary and the forerunner of the existentialists: The Thomas More Press (Herder) has published the first volume of a complete edition of his works introduced by Josef Nadler.

In the *Schweizer Rundschau* of December Ernst Karl Winter wrote from America about the Feeney affair under the title of 'Heresy in Boston?' In January Oskar Bauhofer protested against the confusion caused by the term 'heresy', even if followed by a question mark: the editor permitted the protest, but added a comment that he thought Dr. Bauhofer was over-sharp in his criticism.

EDWARD QUINN

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